

AUGUST 2010
\$4.99



THE SINGING RELIEVER

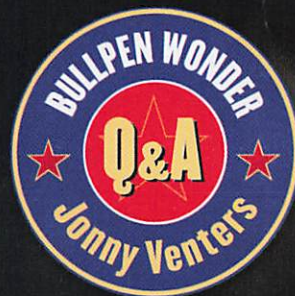
An Evening Of Sushi & Karaoke
With Takashi Saito & Friends

CHOLO TALK

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE
OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES

McCann Breaks AL Monopoly
To Set Up October Intrigue

McVVP!



ALUMNI WEEKEND

The Return Of "Poison Avery"

SHORTSTOP SWITCH

Alex Gonzalez Brings New Look To Infield



"Being a fan means having my back all season long."

THIS IS BRAVES COUNTRY.

BRIAN MCCANN, #16

THE 2010 BRAVES SCHEDULE FEATURES SOME OF THE BIGGEST GAMES IN BASEBALL

Learn more about the affordable, flexible and fun ways to enjoy them for your next group event.

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1 FSS CIN	2 ESPN NYM	3 PTV NYM	4 PTV NYM	5 PTV SF	6 PTV SF	7 SS SF
8 FSS SF	9 SS HOU	10 SS HOU	11 SS HOU	12 LAD	13 PTV LAD	14 PTV LAD
15 FSS LAD	16 PTV LAD	17 SS WAS	18 SS WAS	19 SS WAS	20 SS CHI	21 FOX CHI
22 FSS CHI	23 SS COL	24 SS COL	25 SS COL	26 FLA	27 SS FLA	28 FOX FLA
29 FSS FLA	30 PTV NYM	31 PTV NYM				

HOME GAMES AWAY GAMES
Schedule as of February 2010.
All times Eastern and subject to change.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1 PTV NYM	2 PTV NYM	3 SS FLA	4 SS FLA
5 FSS FLA	6 SS PIT	7 SS PIT	8 SS PIT	9 PTV STL	10 PTV STL	11 FOX STL
12 FSS STL	13 SS WAS	14 SS WAS	15 SS WAS	16 NYM	17 SS NYM	18 FOX NYM
19 FSS NYM	20 SS PHI	21 SS PHI	22 SS PHI	23 WAS	24 SS WAS	25 SS WAS
26 FSS WAS	27 SS FLA	28 SS FLA	29 SS FLA	30 PHI	1 SS PHI	2 SS PHI
3 FSS PHI						

ALL GAMES ARE BROADCAST ON: **680 ROCK100.5** WATCH THE GAMES ON: **SPORTSOUTH FS SOUTHS**

FOX ESPN

braves.com/groups

404.577.9100

© 2010, Atlanta National League Baseball Club, Inc. All rights reserved.™ The Braves script and tomahawk are trademarks of the Atlanta National League Baseball Club, Inc. All rights reserved.



BATTING ORDER

AUGUST 2010

POWER HITTERS

6-7

THE SINGING RELIEVER

An Entertaining Evening Of Sushi And Karaoke
With Takashi Saito And Friends By Patty Rasmussen

8-9

HOMECOMING!

Former Players And Fans Delight In Series Of Events
During First Alumni Weekend By Patty Rasmussen

20-21

PLAYING PEPPER

Jonny Venters Discusses His Amazing Sinker
And Quick Rise To Bullpen Prominence By Patty Rasmussen

22-24

DRIVING FORCE

Troy Glaus Powers The Lineup Into First Place
At Mid-Season By Jon Cooper

26-27

McVP!

McCann Breaks AL Monopoly With 3-Run Double
To Set Up October Intrigue By Gary Caruso

28-29

FOUR STARS

What A Difference A Year Makes
For Hudson, Prado, Infante And Heyward By Gary Caruso

30-31, 36

TEAM BUILDER

First Managerial Stint Lasted Only Four Seasons,
But Cox's Progress Showed A Year Later By Patty Rasmussen

36-37

STORIES OF BOBBY

Cox's Influence Is Widespread
Throughout Managerial Ranks By Patty Rasmussen

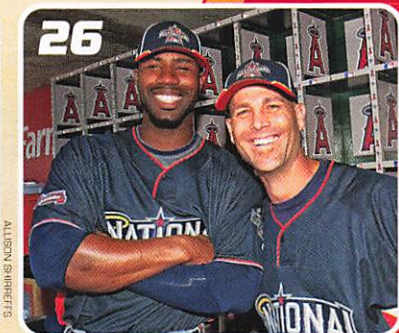
41

SHORTSTOP SWITCH

Gonzalez Brings New Look To Infield
And Provides Veteran Presence For Playoff Run
By Mark Bowman of MLB.com



RODA GRANT/ATLANTA BRAVES



ATLANTA BRAVES



ATLANTA BRAVES

COVER CREDITS

BRIAN MCCANN
by Rich Pilling/2010 MLB Photos
Takashi Saito: Patty Rasmussen
Alex Gonzalez: Christian Petersen/
Getty Images
Design by Clark Odom



BATTING ORDER

AUGUST 2010

SINGLES HITTERS

- 14-15 SCOREBOARD
- 16-17 BUNTS & BASEHITS
- 18-19 OFF THE FIELD
- 38-39 BEHIND THE NUMBERS By Steve Fall
- 54-55 HEROES & HISTORY
- Ryan Klesko's Many Pursuits Include Helping
The Critically Ill By Brian Knapp
- 56 ALUMNI NOTES
- 58-59 BEYOND BASEBALL By Patty Rasmussen
- 60-61 TALKIN' CHOP
- 62 XTRA INNINGS

PITCHERS

- 10-11 PAINTING THE CORNERS By Jay Busbee
- 12-13 A WIFE'S PITCH By Carolyn Lowe
- 17 FRANK WREN
- 19 BOBBY COX
- 24 BATTER UP! By Tommy Hanson
- 29 AROUND BASEBALL By Ken Rosenthal
- 57 GARY CARUSO
- 61 JOHNNY SAJEM'S CARTOON

PINCH- HITTERS

- 48-49 TURNER FIELD/TICKET INFO
- 50 2010 SCHEDULE CALENDAR/TV LISTINGS
- 51 INDIVIDUAL STATS
- 52-53 GAME BY GAME
- 55 MEMORIES By Steve Fall
- 56 BIRTHDAYS

ON DECK

- 42-47 FARM SYSTEM ROUNDUP By Bill Ballew
- 45 DOWN ON THE FARM By Brandon Beachy
- 46-47 FARM TEAM STATS

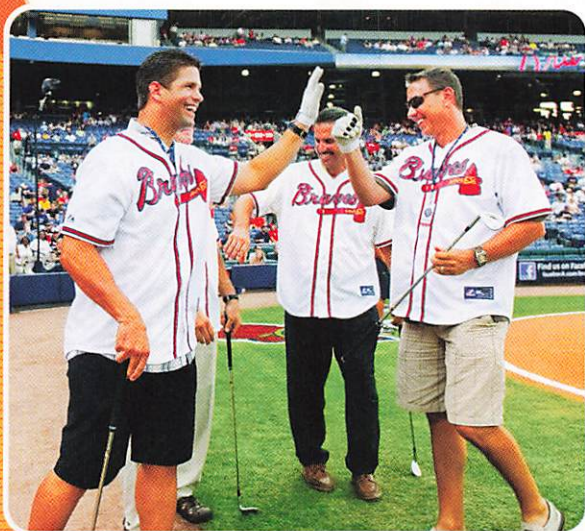


PHOTO BY JIMMY KATZ/ATLANTA BRAVES

10

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 8

CHOPTALK USPS Periodicals Publication 022-732; ISSN 1555-1547 is published monthly for \$37.95 per year (\$56.95 Canada and Mexico; \$76.95 other international; payment in U.S. dollars only) by Wonderdog Publishing, Inc. Copyright 2010 with all rights reserved. Reproduction or use, without permission, of any content, in whole or part - in any manner - is prohibited. Office of publication is located at 12829 Trinity Dr., Stafford, Tex. 77477-4214. Visit Braves.com/ChopTalk. E-mail Letters@ChopTalkonline.com. This is the Official Monthly Magazine of the Atlanta Braves. Single copy price is \$4.99. Periodical postage paid at Stafford, Tex., and additional mailing offices.

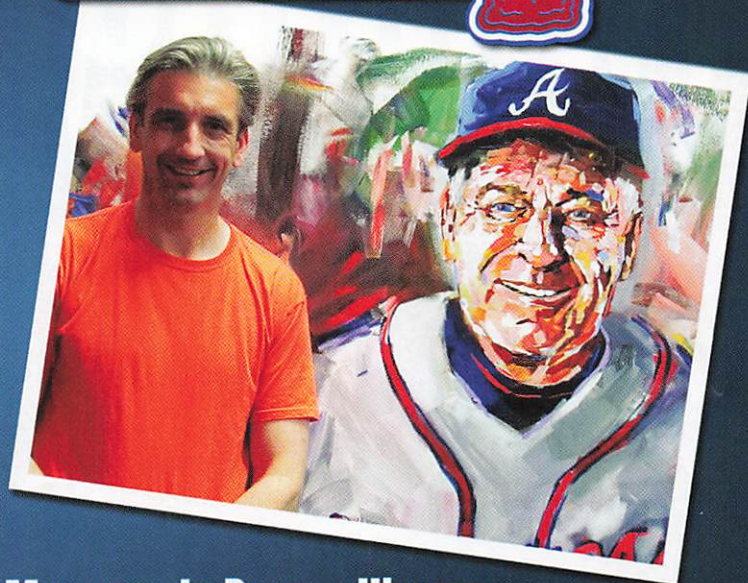
POSTMASTER: Please send address changes and returns to: ChopTalk, P.O. Box 81247, Conyers, Ga. 30013-9247.

ChopTalk

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE
OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES

BOBBY COX POSTER!

This Classic Image of Bobby Cox Was Created By Acclaimed Artist Steve Penley Especially for ChopTalk, And The Original Painting Will Be Presented To Cox.



A Great Way To Remember The Greatest Manager In Braves History

Limited Edition

A True Collector's
Delight

Makes A Great Gift!



- ☐ Enclosed is \$14.95 (includes postage/handling) to receive one (1) Bobby Cox Poster that is unfolded and mailed in a tube.
- ☐ Additional unfolded posters mailed in the same tube are \$9.95 each.

TOTAL
ENCLOSED
\$

☐ CHECK ENCLOSED

☐ BILL MY CREDIT CARD

☐ MC ☐ VISA ☐ AMEX ☐ DISCOVER

CC #

EXP.

SEND TO:

NAME

ADDRESS

APT. NO.

CITY

STATE

ZIP

BILL TO:

NAME

ADDRESS

APT. NO.

CITY

STATE

ZIP

Clip, Photocopy or Hand Print This Coupon

MAIL IT IN!

SEND NAME, ADDRESS AND
CHECK OR CARD INFO TO:

CHOPTALK

P.O. BOX 81247
CONYERS, GA
30013-9247

PHONE IT IN! 1-877-655-2467

The Singing Reliever

By Patty Rasmussen

**An Entertaining Evening Of Sushi And Karaoke
With Takashi Saito And Friends**



Most players spend their off days with their families. But traveling over 6,000 miles to do so would be a stretch for reliever Takashi Saito.

The 40-year-old Saito (L) lives alone in an Atlanta condo this year. His wife, Yukiko, and their three daughters, Karumi (15), Momoka (12) and Airi, (9 months) remain at their home in Yokohama, Japan, during the season, due to conflicting schedules between school and baseball.

Though the family has made extended visits to the U.S. during the season, once in March and another scheduled in August, Saito finds himself alone much of the time. His rare days off are often spent trying to feel closer to home and people left behind, and that means food, fun, and relaxation, Japanese-style.

The Braves had a home game June 20 vs. Kansas City, followed by an off day, which the team used to travel to Chicago. Saito, who was on the disabled list with a hamstring strain, was due to make his rehab start with the Gwinnett Braves that day. He pitched the first inning of the 2 o'clock game and allowed only one hit in one inning, striking out one batter and not giving up any walks. Eight of his 13 pitches were strikes.

His day's work completed, Saito and his interpreter, Kosuke Inaji, were off to do errands, and later that evening, to enjoy a traditional Japanese meal at one of Saito's favorite restaurants in the Atlanta area, Sushi House Hayakawa, located on Buford Highway outside I-285 between Doraville and Norcross.

The restaurant is nestled in the corner of an unassuming strip mall. Saito and Inaji, along with Inaji's roommate Shogo Osawa, arrived around 7:30 p.m. and were ushered to their table in the one-room restaurant, which is dominated by an L-shaped sushi bar. Two expert sushi chefs diligently prepared the fresh fish.

The group ordered a round of Asahi's, a Japanese beer, and scrutinized the menu, but Saito ended up ordering for the group. He selected a variety of sushi and cooked foods in order to sample as many different dishes as possible.

Orders in, the conversation turned to baseball and Saito's interesting career. The Los Angeles Dodgers signed him in February 2006 after his successful 14-year career pitching for the Yokohama BayStars in the Japanese Central League, where he won 87 games and was a four-time All-Star. Saito started the 2006 season with the Dodgers' Triple-A team in Las Vegas, which worked to his advantage.

"He seems much more comfortable getting around, trying to talk to his American teammates," said Inaji. "I think it's because he spent a little time in the minor leagues and didn't have an interpreter."

It was sink or swim for Saito, and he chose to swim, even if it meant it was slower going.

It ended up being a quick learning curve though, because he was called up April 5, to replace Eric Gagne. At age 36, he was the oldest rookie in Dodgers history. Even taking into account his Japanese League experience, he had an outstanding rookie season. He was first on the club with a career-high 72 games and 24 saves and ranked seventh in NL Rookie of the Year balloting.

Saito still understands more English than he speaks, but he's not uncomfortable interacting with English speakers, whether they are teammates, media or fans.

Speaking through his interpreter, Saito talked about his enthusiasm for the Braves and especially his respect for his teammates.

"This is one of the first times I've played on a team like this one, where everyone comes together. We pick each other up, and there is a different hero every night," he said. "I appreciate someone like Chipper Jones who still plays even when he's hurting."

Saito explained that he sees the Braves as a team with three levels of players - young, energetic rookies, veterans who know how to play during the dog days, and the guys in the middle - journeyman players who keep up everyone's spirits.

"All of these types of players are extremely important," said Saito. "We rely on each other, and without the three groups of people, it probably wouldn't work."

He also talked about his family and how he maintains contact with them despite the geographic and time difference. The Eastern Time Zone is 13 hours behind Japan.

"I speak to my wife every day," said Saito.

"But I'm not always able to speak to my daughters because of the time difference, their activities, or them being in bed."

However, the family has regularly scheduled weekly webcam visits via Skype, and he anxiously awaits their arrival for two weeks in August.

The meal began with a relatively tame salad with freshly made ginger dressing. Then the sushi plates begin arriving... thick cucumber slices topped with lobster salad and roe (fish eggs), Aburi Toro, fatty tuna seared with a blowtorch laying atop rice with wasabi and ponzu, a soy sauce, on the

seating, like a booth in a restaurant. A television monitor was built into a wall with the karaoke equipment underneath it. Several telephone-book-sized songbooks were stacked on the coffee table in the center of the room, written in both English and Japanese. The songs included everything from "Happy Birthday" to the collected works of "U2." One book was entirely Japanese pop and traditional songs.

Kosuke took the microphone first, belting out an energetic rendition of "Truckin'" by the Grateful Dead. Saito, who is quite good, followed with an emotive version of

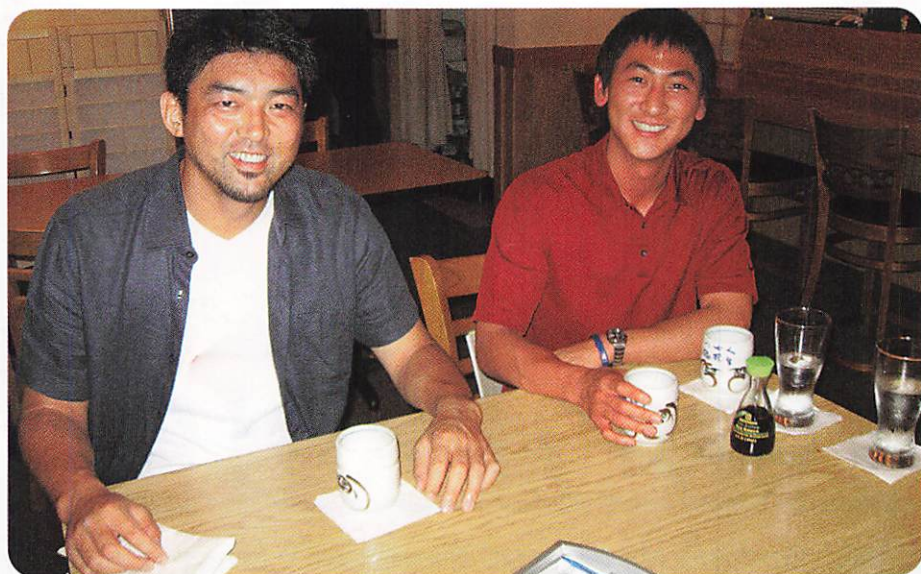


PHOTO: KATY HANSEN

side. He also ordered Unagi, freshwater eel on rice, small blocks of cold tofu (bean curd) in a bowl, steamed edamame (soybeans), Ama Ebi (sweet shrimp), Sake (salmon) garnished with roe and shavings of green onions, and one of his favorites, Gyutan Karaage, grilled cow tongue, a specialty from his home region, Sendai.

The two-hour feast was topped with cups of hot brown rice tea and green tea ice cream covered in a sweet rice paste.

The next stop was Japanese-style karaoke at Karaoke Melody, conveniently located in the same shopping center. Karaoke is a Japanese innovation and an especially popular form of entertainment both in Japan and in Japanese enclaves in the U.S. Rather than sit in a large bar performing karaoke in front of all the patrons, Japanese karaoke offers private rooms where groups can relax and sing. Saito is a karaoke enthusiast. It's one of his favorite ways to unwind.

The three men and their guest were assigned a small private room with built-in

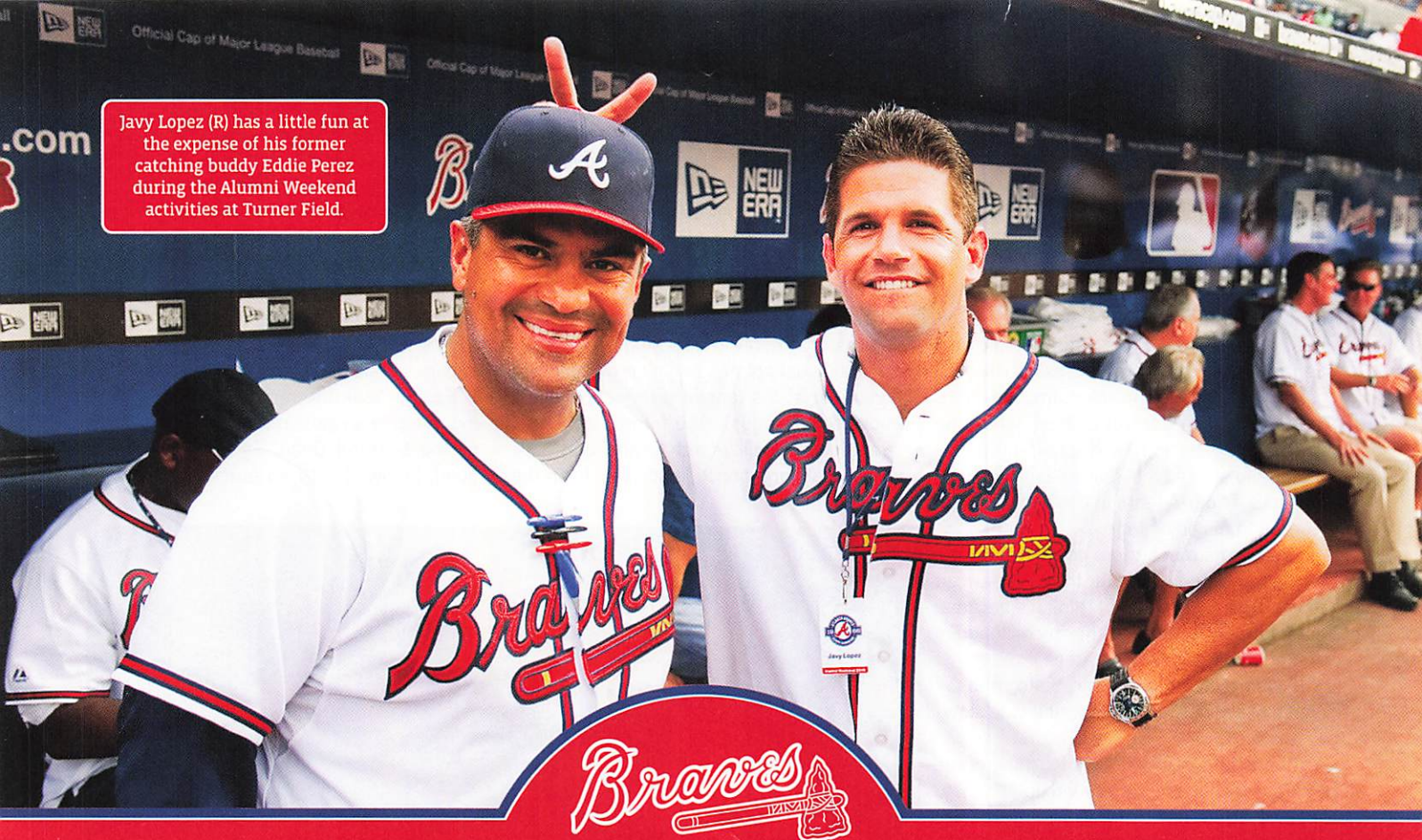
Saito and his interpreter, Kosuke Inaji (R), await the arrival of a feast of a wide variety of sushi and cooked food that the pitcher ordered for the group.

the Beatles' "Hey Jude," even "singing" the screams at the end. He sings in English and sticks with ballads, since the slower pace makes it easier to read the words and sing along. In addition to "Hey Jude," Saito performed "Me and You" by Kenny Chesney, "Honesty" by Billy Joel, and "I Don't Want to Miss A Thing," by Aerosmith. He even channeled his inner Elvis Presley with a soulful version of "Love Me Tender."

After about 90 minutes of singing and laughter, the group settled the tab and left. It was almost 11 p.m., but Saito had the next day off. In good spirits, he said he thought his next stop would be another traditional form of Japanese relaxation, a sauna.

While the evening's activities were no substitute for the real thing, the meal and entertainment went a long way toward making Atlanta feel a little more like home for Saito.

Javy Lopez (R) has a little fun at the expense of his former catching buddy Eddie Perez during the Alumni Weekend activities at Turner Field.



HOMECOMING!

Former Players And Fans Delight In Series Of Events During First Alumni Weekend

By Patty Rasmussen
Photos by Pouya Dianat

The Braves' inaugural Alumni Weekend was a major success. Four days of fan-centric events held June 25-28 raised approximately \$350,000 to benefit the Atlanta Braves Foundation and its grants program. Over 100,000 fans attended the weekend interleague series against the Detroit Tigers.

The events included a casino night, a celebrity softball game, a golf tournament, and meet-and-greet autograph sessions at Turner Field.

Fan favorites including Sid Bream, Dale Murphy, Steve Avery, Javy Lopez, Marquis Grissom and Bruce Benedict participated in the June 25 meet-and-greet. Long lines of patient fans waited at points on concourses around the stadium and in Turner Field's Fan Plaza.

A question-and-answer session, moderated by Emmy Award-winning producer/director Ken Burns (*The Civil War*, *Baseball*), was held on the Plaza. Burns questioned Otis Nixon, Javy Lopez and Sid Bream about the Braves' dominance during the 1990s, recalling their highlight reel of accomplishments.

Alumni players waited in the dugout prior to the on-field introductions. Bobby Cox exchanged handshakes and back slaps with the players.

"There aren't many managers who could come into a dugout

with that many 'old-timers' and not only know all of them but have managed all but one (Marty Perez)," said retired Braves Hall of Fame broadcaster Pete Van Wieren, who also was part of the festivities.

Braves president John Schuerholz said to the alums, "Each of you contributed to the Braves. We wouldn't be where we are today without you all. We appreciate and thank you for it."

The alumni and their families enjoyed catching up in the suites set aside for them. Murphy and Avery made appearances during the television and radio broadcasts.

DIAMOND GALA

Held in the ballroom at the new Loews Hotel in Midtown Atlanta, the Diamond Gala featured an evening of casino games and silent and live auctions. After a cocktail reception, the doors opened into a ballroom with gaming tables featuring blackjack, craps, roulette, slots and Texas-Hold 'Em.

Broadcaster Don Sutton was the evening's emcee, introducing almost the entire current Braves team and coaches who served as dealers while guests gambled with Braves Bucks, which could be "cashed in" for raffle tickets at the end of the evening.

The live auction included two business elite tickets to anywhere on Delta Airlines, which went for \$8,000. A two-hour tour



Pitching coach Roger McDowell demonstrates the proper arm slot and release point for playing roulette.

coach Mark Fox, and more. Murphy and Bream captained the two squads.

GOLF

The Atlanta Braves Foundation Golf Classic teed off June 28 at East Lake Golf Club. Braves chairman and CEO Terry McGuirk, Schuerholz, general manager Frank Wren, broadcaster Chip Caray, and Braves alumni including Murphy, Nixon, Lopez, Ron Gant, Jordan, Charlie Leibrandt, McMichael, Pete Smith, Zane Smith, Ron Reed, Terry Harper and more took part in the fifth annual event.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

During the inaugural Braves Alumni Weekend, the franchise announced the formation of the Atlanta Braves Alumni Association. Gus Eurtion, Braves executive director of marketing, said that the organization has a plan under review to further engage alumni at special events.

"The fans have responded overwhelmingly on how great it was to be able to interact with Braves greats in a unique way and bring back fond memories," said Eurtion in responding to the weekend's activities. "The impact must never be underestimated on what they mean as a role model to Braves fans all over the world. We look forward to seeing each of them in the near future and for years to come as we look to continue this annual event."

Dale Murphy (bottom/left photo), Otis Nixon (bottom/right), and Sid Bream (inset/left) exchange high-fives with former Braves and other teammates prior to the Celebrity Softball Game.

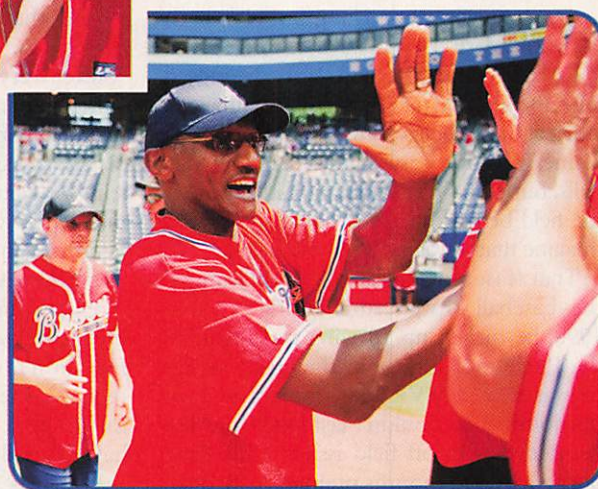
for four in the Delta Airlines Flight Simulator brought in \$3,000, and a trip for two to New York to see the Braves vs. the Mets, including hotel, netted another \$5,000. Bidding was so heated for the 4-day/3-night vacation at Casa Pacifica in Los Suenos, Costa Rica, that two trips were sold for \$5,000 each. A 3-day/2-night trip for four to Braves spring training sold for \$2,600.

Fifty dollars bought guests a chance at Mystery Bags featuring everything from autographed Braves items to jewelry and golf outings. Brody Hendrix, from suburban Kennesaw, picked up a golf outing for four from his Mystery Bag. Hendrix described himself as a "huge Braves fan" and an amateur sports memorabilia collector. Tickets to the Diamond Gala were a Father's Day gift from his wife. The fact that all the proceeds went to the Atlanta Braves Foundation was a selling point for him.

"It's absolutely going to a good cause," he said. "This is, by far, the best event I've ever been to. I'll be back again. That's for sure."

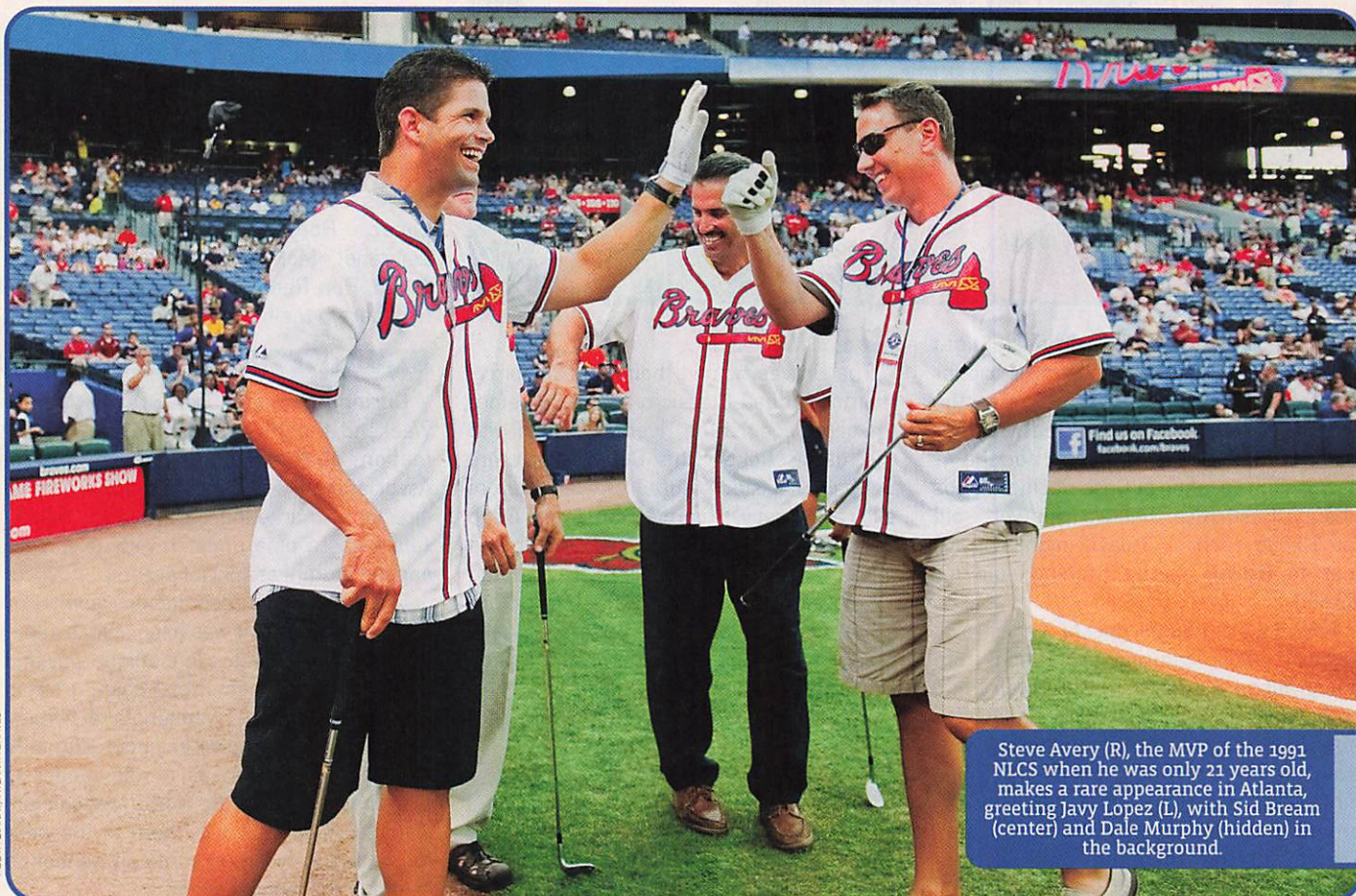
PLAY BALL!

The Braves hosted their first Celebrity-Alumni Softball Classic on June 26 before the game against the Tigers. Included with the game ticket, the Celebrity-Alumni Softball Classic featured Braves alumni such as Murphy, Bream, Nixon, Avery, Gene Garber, Greg McMichael, Brian Jordan and more. Celebrities included local radio and TV personalities; actor Daniel Cudmore (The Twilight Saga: Eclipse); singers Dionne Farris and Jessie James; The Zach Brown Band's Jimmy DeMartini and Chris Fryar; University of Georgia basketball





THE RETURN OF "POISON AVERY"



Steve Avery (R), the MVP of the 1991 NLCS when he was only 21 years old, makes a rare appearance in Atlanta, greeting Javy Lopez (L), with Sid Bream (center) and Dale Murphy (hidden) in the background.

TRIVIA QUESTION: Who's the most recent member of the Braves' famed early-'90s Big Four pitching rotation to throw a pitch at Turner Field? Not Greg Maddux. Not Tom Glavine. Not John Smoltz. So that leaves... Steve Avery? Hang on. He's been gone for nearly 15 years!

Okay, it's a trick question. Avery did indeed take the mound at Turner Field June 26, albeit at the Celebrity-Braves Alumni Softball Game. Yes, Avery was under-handing softballs, but with Otis Nixon and Sid Bream in the field behind him, you could squint and imagine that it was 1991 all over again.

That season, a 21-year-old Avery stunned the baseball world. After going 3-11 in 1990, he racked up 18 wins and throttled the Pittsburgh Pirates in the NLCS where he was named MVP. Sadly for Braves fans, his dominance wouldn't last long. Injuries, combined with off-field issues – his first-born, delivered months premature in 1994,

weighed just two pounds at birth – sapped both his control and his focus. His final pitch in a Braves uniform came in Game 4 of the 1996 World Series. (You remember. The Leyritz Game. Let's move on.)

And that was pretty much it for his career. Oh, sure, there was a guy named "Steve Avery" who pitched for Boston and Cincinnati in the late '90s, but that guy bore only the faintest resemblance to the Avery of 1991. Aside from a peculiar 19-game stint for Detroit in 2003 after three years of inactivity, Avery faded into Michigan. Like fictional gangster Keyser Soze, he was gone as if he'd never existed.

There would be no pitching-coach gig, no cushy "baseball advisor" spot for Avery. He didn't even grant many interview requests. He was done with the game, no matter how much it – and his fans – may have wanted him back.

Which is what made his appearance at

the June 25-28 Alumni Weekend such a pleasant surprise. Unlike many ballplayers, who age in dog years, Avery looks almost exactly as he did when he was sending Pirates back to the dugout en masse in 1991 to earn the nickname "Poison Avery." He's got a bit of a gut – the guy did just turn 40, after all – but his face still carries the same wry, "ain't this fun?" half-grin.

Everywhere Avery went, the same questions awaited: "Where have you been? What have you been up to?"

And every time, he'd reply with some variation of the same answers: "Michigan, being a dad."

He's got three children now, all healthy. "I'm really happy now," Avery said. "People don't realize how much you have to be away from home when you're in baseball. You're gone eight, nine months a year, easy. I didn't want to do that to my family."

As the 40-year-old Avery served up soft-

Avery, signing autographs, was a fan favorite in the early '90s and remains one, as his hearty welcome at Turner Field proved.

balls – “He’s relying on the changeup today,” Atlanta Journal-Constitution icon Furman Bisher deadpanned – his ex- teammates smiled as they remembered him unleashing fireballs, so victorious so fast that he didn’t quite know how to act.

“He and Deion Sanders were best buddies,” former second baseman Jeff Treadway said with a laugh. “I couldn’t understand the connection between those two. Deion used to make fun of this big white underwear Avery used to wear. So ridiculous.”

“You know what I remember?” Otis Nixon added. “I remember Deion riding him like a horse when we won [in 1992]. Like a horse! He was a big kid then, and he’s a big kid now.”

Indeed, Avery looked so much like he did back in the early '90s that you start wondering: What If. What if he hadn’t gotten injured? Would Braves history have played out differently? It’s a point for fans to debate, but the Braves themselves already



POPE/DANAT/ATLANTA BRAVES

have their answer.

“What if” is not something we consider in this game,” said team president John Schuerholz, with a measured tone borne of years of poker playing, GM-style.

“When we was with us, he was good.

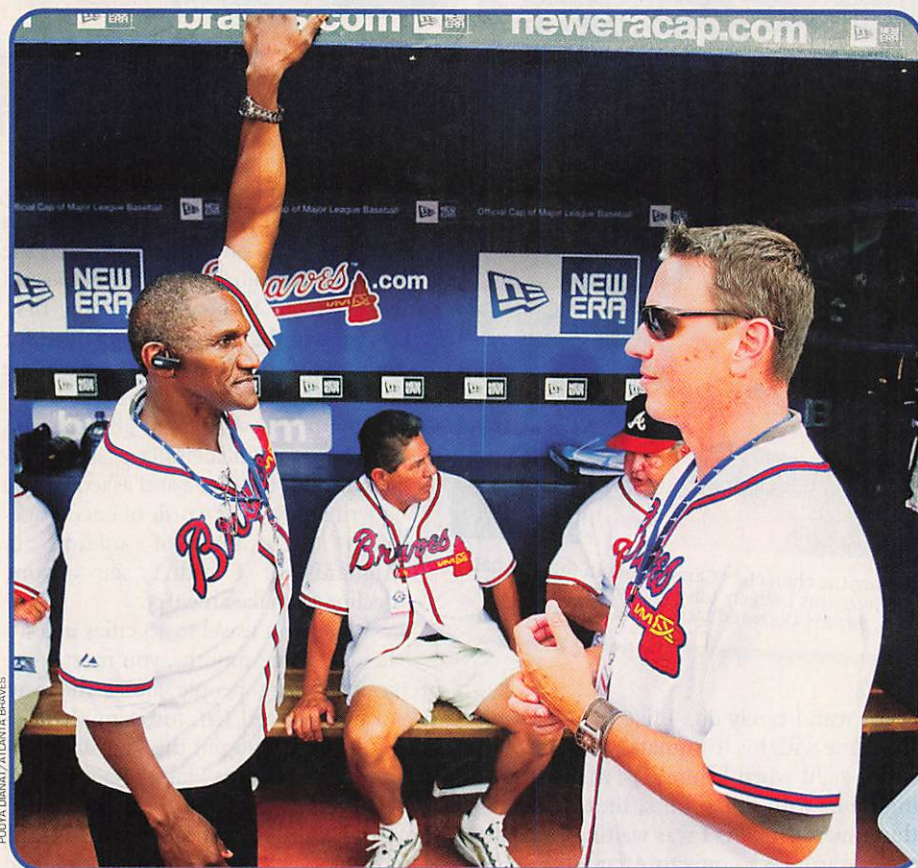
Obviously, it would have been great if we could have continued the way we had been going, without physical problems. But it’s hard to complain about what we got from Steve Avery.”

“It was unfortunate that his career was cut short,” Treadway said. “He could have been second to none.”

In the three seasons 1991-93, when he was but 21, 22 and 23 years old, Avery won 18 games twice, averaged nearly 16 wins per year and had a combined 3.17 ERA. After that, he was never the same again. Essentially, he was finished before he turned 30, winning just 46 more games in seven seasons.

Still, might there be another chapter left in the Avery-Braves story? Schuerholz noted that “indirect” inquiries had been made to see about getting Avery more involved with the Braves, but he’s always preferred to remain at home. But during the alumni softball game, Avery looked around at his fellow teammates and up into the stands, where he’d received the second-largest cheers of the day after Dale Murphy.

“I can’t believe the reception I’ve gotten here,” he said. “I brought my oldest son (yes, Evan Thomas Avery, who weighed two pounds at birth in 1994) to see what it was all about. If they’ll have me, I’d love to come back.”



POPE/DANAT/ATLANTA BRAVES

Avery (R) and Otis Nixon (L) hang out in the dugout while bench coach Chino Cadahia (behind Avery) visits with former infielder Marty Perez (center).

A Wife's Pitch

BY CAROLYN LOWE



31,294 AIR MILES IN JUST THE FIRST HALF!

THANK GOD for the All-Star Break! Heading into the Mid-Summer Classic, the Braves had played 88 games in 94 days. This is a profession that definitely deserves three days off!

As the break neared, friends and family asked Derek and me what we were going to do with our "vacation." Our answer: "Absolutely nothing!" We may go see a movie in an actual theater, instead of ordering it from Comcast's On Demand. We'll probably go to a restaurant or two in Atlanta that we've yet to try. And we'll take the dogs on a lot of long walks.

I know, totally lame! And while part of me is jealous of some of our friends in the game who have exotic plans, I have to admit, I'm a bit beat-up... and I'm not the one who's had to suit-up and take the field.

To tell you the truth, the first half really did fly by... literally. From Opening Day to the break, I've taken 26 plane flights and logged 31,294 Delta miles! Can you imagine how many hours of my life I've wasted waiting in the airport security line? Makes me wonder if my IQ has dropped since April.

Anyone who has flown over the last couple of years knows what a drag it can be. Baggage fees mean people try to cram as much stuff as humanly possible into the one carry-on and one-personal item you're supposed to be allowed to bring on-board.

I always seem to be stuck in the aisle behind the guy who swears his 20-year-old, full-size, hard-sided Samsonite will fit into the overhead bin - wheels first!

And I know people are upset about the racial profiling going on in Arizona these days, but I swear U.S. airports have something against 30-something blonde women, because I get pulled out of the boarding line for the last-minute security pat-down all the time.

Makes me jealous of Derek and the guys flying on the team charter. Now that's flying the friendly skies! They always get a hot meal instead of having to spend \$7 on the "snack pack." They don't have to take their computer out and "put it in a bin of its own." They don't have to put their liquids in a ziplock baggie. Pretty great! Although wives are allowed to take a couple trips with the team



PHOTOS SPECIAL

Instead of heading off on an exotic trip during the All-Star break, Carolyn and Derek Lowe, seen dining at the Horseradish Grill, stayed in Atlanta.



Among the characters Carolyn met in the first half was this Dodgers fan that showed up at a Braves/Diamondbacks game in Arizona.

every year, I rarely do. I like to give Derek that time with his teammates.

But right when I think I'm at my breaking point with the airlines, they do something surprising. As I was waiting to board a plane from St. Louis to Atlanta, the gate

agent made an announcement that there were a number of military personnel on leave from Iraq and Afghanistan on the flight. She announced each by name and allowed them to board the plane first. Everyone in the gate area applauded for minutes on end. It made me forgive the guy with the Samsonite.

Then on July 4, a flight attendant on my plane to Philadelphia passed journals around the plane and asked people to write prayers or words of encouragement to a unit of soldiers in Afghanistan. I didn't see anyone decline to make an entry.

When you travel to 13 cities in a little over three months, you meet some pretty interesting people along the way. Take a man named Jeff, for example. He's one of the guys who put the "fan" in fanatic. He was dressed in a Manny Ramirez #99 Dodgers jersey and had his face painted white and blue. On his head, he wore a long wig of black "Manny" dreadlocks and

topped it off with a Dodgers batting helmet of sorts.

Nothing really out of the ordinary if you're at Dodger Stadium, I guess. Problem was, we were in Phoenix playing the Diamondbacks! Needless to say, my curiosity got the best of me, and during a break in the action at Chase Field, I went over to where he sat and asked him what he was doing at a Braves/Diamondbacks game dressed like that.

His answer, "To tick off my wife!"

Now that's taking marital bliss to a whole new low! Perhaps even more shocking than Jeff's reasoning for his odd attire is his line of work. Turns out, he said he's a youth pastor.

I wish I had kept count of the number of taxicabs I've ridden in throughout the first half of the season. Fifty? A hundred? Too many to remember.

But there is one ride I'll never forget. On my way from the hotel in Miami to Landshark Stadium, I had a Jamaican cab driver named Leroy. He didn't want to be

called Leroy, however. He said his dream was to make it big as a DJ in South Beach.

So, he smiled at me through his big, white Dolce & Gabbana sunglasses and insisted I call him "DJ Stress Free."

I don't know if I was meant to be sent a message that day, but he preached that we are all one spirit and need to inspire each other. His mantra was, "We are too blessed to be stressed." I left the cab in a more positive state of mind and can honestly say I'd rather take lessons from Leroy than youth pastor Jeff!

Sometimes, I've been fortunate (or unfortunate) enough to have a brush with celebrity here and there. Derek is from a suburb of Detroit, and being a fan of basketball, he's a big supporter of the Detroit Pistons. (I know, unfortunate!)

I ran into the Pistons All-Star guard, Richard Hamilton, in of all places, a sunglasses store in Philadelphia. I forgot my sunglasses in Atlanta and was there shopping for a replacement when a gentleman

asked me if the ones he was trying on looked good on him. Imagine my surprise when it was Hamilton. Even more surprising was his constant haggling with the salesgirl to get a lower price! I laughed to myself as he went on-and-on with various bargaining techniques. The salesgirl, obviously oblivious to the fact the NBA had made him a multi-millionaire, sold the glasses to him for half-price! After he left, I told them who he was. Then I paid full price for my glasses! What was that I said about my IQ?

There's no telling what characters I may encounter and what adventures lie ahead for me in the second half of the season. All I can say is the way the Braves are playing, the playoffs would be a welcome adventure.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Carolyn Lowe, the wife of Derek Lowe, is contributing a monthly column to ChopTalk throughout the season.


Holiday Inn
Atlanta Downtown Centennial Park
101 Andrew Young Ind. Blvd, Atlanta, GA 30303
404-524-5555

Walking distance to Centennial Park,
Georgia Aquarium and World Of Coke

Free High Speed Wireless Access

Newly renovated

Rates starting at

\$79

www.hidowntownatlanta.com/braves



POETIC JUSTICE

BY GARY CARUSO

STEPHEN BISHOP didn't make it as a Braves player, and after two years, he gave up being a Braves scout to pursue an acting career. In what can be viewed as a case of poetic justice, Bishop has been cast to play Justice - Braves Hall of Famer David Justice - in the movie version of the best-selling book "Moneyball."

And the poetry doesn't stop there. In fact, it's barely beginning.

Bishop, whose many acting credits on TV and the big screen include "CSI: Miami," "Hancock," "Grey's Anatomy," "Lost" and "Friday Night Lights," regarded Justice as his favorite player when he was playing college baseball at the University of California-Riverside and looked enough like him that his teammates called him "Davey Justice."

Once when the Braves were playing the Giants at Candlestick Park, Bishop went down to the rail before a game, talked to Justice, and convinced him to give him a pair of batting gloves.

"I had a 22-game hitting streak wearing those gloves," Bishop said. "Those gloves were magic for me. It was crazy. It wasn't just the 22-game hitting streak, but the way I was hitting the ball was unbelievable. Everything I hit was hard. I used them so much that the palms ripped out. I used them until the streak ended, and then I threw them away."

The poetry is just getting warmed up!

Bishop's UC-Riverside team made it to the Division II College World Series that year, and after the following season, his senior year, he signed as an undrafted free agent with - yes - the Braves. He showed up for spring training in West Palm Beach, and when Justice saw him, he said to Bishop, "What are you doing here?"

"I told him I signed, and he said, 'Wow!' He took me under his wing right away, showed me around West Palm, and told everyone I was his little brother," Bishop said proudly.

"He did the same thing for me in Atlanta, took me around and told everyone I was his little brother. He's been to my mother's house, and I've been to his.

"I have a younger brother named David, too," Bishop continued. "I also know David's (Justice) wife, Rebecca, and when they were going to get married, she called me and said, 'Me and your

brother are getting married.' I said, 'You're a little too old to be marrying my brother.' And she said, 'No... David Justice!'"

By now, you get the idea... For Bishop to be cast as Justice in a major film - Brad Pitt, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Robin Wright are among the talent for the movie that recently began shooting - is, yes, poetic justice, to say the least.

The two have remained friends but lost touch for a couple of years until ChopTalk reconnected them recently.

"He didn't know I'd gotten the role until we talked," Bishop said. "It was exciting to talk to him and get his blessing - gigantic."

The Columbia project is based on Michael Lewis' 2003 non-fiction book about Oakland Athletics GM Billy Beane and his strategy for building a successful team without paying players enormous salaries. Justice, who played the last year of his career with the Athletics in 2002, is one of the key players in the story, along with first baseman/DH Scott Hatteberg to be played by NBC's Parks and Recreation star Chris Pratt.

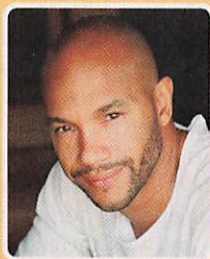
"This is an exciting time for me," said Bishop of the film due for a 2011 release. "I've paid my dues and I'm finally getting a shot. This is a pretty big role. At the time, David was the biggest star on the team, and he's in the film a great deal. He's in most of the speaking scenes for a player. This is the opportunity every actor dreams about."

Bishop's baseball career was brief, mainly due to a knee injury and the acting bug that he's had since childhood. In extended spring training of 1993, he sustained a freak knee injury during a drill and had surgery to repair torn cartilage back in Atlanta. He was told he'd miss the year but was back by mid-season. Playing first

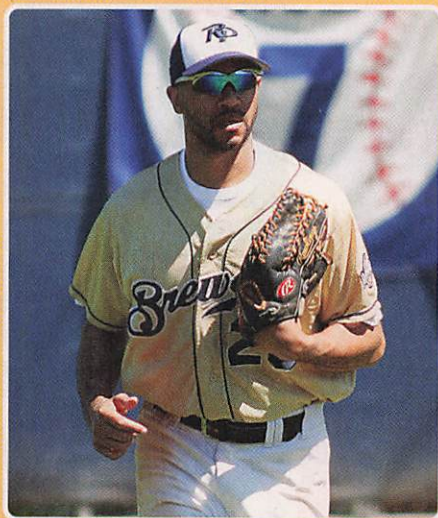
base and third base at rookie-level Idaho Falls of the Pioneer League, he hit .382 with two home runs and 20 RBIs in 20 games (68 at-bats).

In 1994, Bishop was back at his college position, outfield, and played independent league ball for St. Paul, and the next year he was with Baltimore's advanced Class-A team at High

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Actor Stephen Bishop (L), a former Braves farmhand and scout, has been cast to play David Justice (R) in the movie "Moneyball," but he has to learn to play left-handed rather than right-handed as he did two years ago in the Los Angeles Baseball League (below).



Desert of the California League. He hit just .116 in 12 games and, after being released, decided to give acting a try. However, the Braves remembered him and called to offer him an internship in scouting. He took it for three months and then became a full-fledged scout in the Southeast. He stayed with that for two years, and among the players he scouted that were drafted is Derrick Lewis, a righthander that was Myrtle Beach Pitcher of the Year in 1999 and now is the pitching coach of the Braves' advanced rookie club at Danville.

After all this, if you think Bishop is perfect to portray Justice in a movie, think again. Justice was left-handed all the way. Bishop throws right, though he has done some switch-hitting, which helps.

"I've had to learn to catch and throw left-handed," said Bishop, who worked out five days a week at Southern Cal's baseball facility, taking flyballs and grounders and throwing with the "wrong" hand.

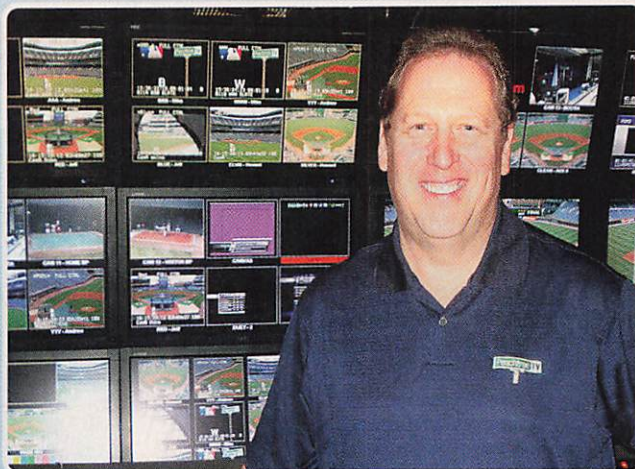
After all, nothing's perfect.

ALL-STAR MICKEY

In conjunction with this year's All-Star Game in Anaheim, home of Disneyland, 36 different designs of MLB-themed Mickey Mouse collectible statuettes and related apparel and merchandise were created. The statuettes are replicas of seven-and-a-half-foot tall statues that were placed at key Southern California landmarks leading up to the All-Star Game on July 13. The Braves-decorated statue was located at Disneyland Esplanade near Disney's California Adventureland. The life-size statues stand 7.5 feet and weigh 989 pounds. The 7.5-inch statuettes are \$24.99 and are available through MLB.com and various retail outlets.



SHOW AN INSTANT REPLAY



PATTY HANSEN

INSTANT REPLAYS may not last long, but they require immediate coordination from numerous people. It takes the combined effort of the entire television crew – which numbers 35 to 40 for Braves games on Peachtree TV – to execute a series of replays.

When a great play happens, coordinating producer Glenn Diamond (above) gets about four to five seconds to choose the optimal camera angles for replays. He watches 12 to 14 monitors simultaneously, and knows which cameras best capture specific plays. Tape operators help by pointing out good shots, as the crew works seamlessly together.

"The cameraman initially gets the shot," said Diamond, who has worked for Turner Sports since 1982. "What he's shooting is being recorded into a tape machine. The tape operator has hit 'record.' So, the cameraman is shooting it, the tape operator is recording it... He's watching it as I'm watching it. When the play is done, the tape operator will cue it up. And then I will let the director know I want a replay on that play."

The crew in the production truck, situated beyond the right-field stands at Turner Field, names their tape machines. For example, Diamond calls his high/tight camera view from the first base side the "Y" machine. A looser shot from the high/third base camera is in the "B" machine. After a key play is made, Diamond may say to the director, "First angle is on Y, second angle is on B."

As soon as they get ready to show the replay, Diamond tells the broadcasters what to expect. He can speak with John Smoltz, Joe Simpson or Ernie Johnson Jr. in the broadcast booth via IFB – an intercom system that enables conversations that viewers can't hear.

"A lot of times, I'll say 'Replay coming, two angles - first angle low/home or first angle high/first,'" said Diamond. "So, John knows there is a replay coming and what he's going to see."

Replays often include what the crew calls "reaction shots." After a spectacular catch, they may show the pitcher clapping or the team celebrating in the dugout. This results in as many as four total replays being shown for one play. They may show two or three different angles and the reaction shot.

- STEVE FALL

CHIPPING AWAY



CHIPPER JONES hit his 433rd career home run July 15, the first day after the All-Star break, to provide the winning run in the Braves' 2-1 victory over Milwaukee. The homer left him one shy of tying **Juan Gonzalez** for 37th on the all-time list. His next target after Gonzalez would be new Hall of Famer **Andre Dawson**, who is 36th with 438.

Chipper, 38, has made no secret for quite some time that retirement is something he has thought about and discussed with his family due to nagging injuries and a drop in production. In mid-June, the media seemed ready to "retire" him, but after he met with **John Schuerholz**, such talk was put to rest.

Coincidentally or not, at the same time, Chipper began to swing the bat like the future Hall of Famer that he is. Since meeting with Schuerholz on June 15 to talk about his future, he stopped talking about the retirement issue and his production increased drastically. Since June 15 and through July 16, Chipper reached base in 21 of 23 games and was 24-for-81 (.296) with 10 extra-base hits, including four home runs. In 51 games before that, he batted .228 with 13 extra-base hits, three of them home runs.

Chipper left the July 16 game in the eighth inning with a hamstring strain. He didn't start the next night but did pinch-hit.

Chipper only hit three home runs in his first 51 games, but after putting the lid on retirement talk June 15, he hit four in his next 23 games.

SHOOTING STAR

Billy Wagner lost the battle but won the war... and then decided to skip the whole thing. Wagner was one of five players on the National League All-Star Final Vote ballot, which was won by Cincinnati's **Joey Votto**. After the All-Star teams were announced, five players from each league were selected for the Final Vote online balloting by fans. However, Wagner then was asked to join the NL team by manager **Charlie Manuel** as a late replacement for **Jason Heyward**, who couldn't play due to a thumb injury. Since Wagner was nursing a sore ankle (pinched nerve that required a cortisone shot) and had vacation plans with his family, he declined, and Dodgers reliever **Hong-Chih Kuo** was added. It would have been Wagner's seventh All-Star selection. For much more on the Braves' All-Stars, see pages 26-29.

NO. 156

Bobby Cox added to his major record for

ejections on July 17 when he was thrown out of a game for the 156th time by crew chief **Joe West** due to **Jonny Venters** hitting **Prince Fielder** with a pitch in the eighth inning of the Braves' 6-3 loss. The previous inning, Fielder hit a game-tying home run off **Tim Hudson**. Venters nearly hit Fielder with his first pitch that sailed over Fielder's head. That caused plate umpire **Angel Hernandez** to issue a warning to both teams. On his next pitch, Venters drilled Fielder in the back. Venters and Cox were automatically ejected, though both denied that Fielder was intentionally targeted.

ROOKIE'S RETURN

Jason Heyward was hitless in his July 15 return from the disabled list, but he made his presence known just the same with two excellent plays - a throw and a catch - in right field during the Braves' 2-1 victory over Milwaukee. Playing his first game

since June 26 with a deep thumb bruise (an MRI showed no structural damage) forced him to the DL, Heyward made a strong, accurate throw to nail the Brewers' **Casey McGhee**, who was trying to go from first to third on a single. Then in the fourth inning, Heyward slammed into the wall at the right-field corner when he ran down a potential extra-base hit by McGhee. Heyward fell to the ground and appeared stunned or possibly injured, but eventually got to his feet and stayed in the game. Heyward originally injured his thumb May 14 sliding head-first.

TRACKING PLAYERS

The Braves had to make a roster move right after the All-Star break when **Eric O'Flaherty** was suffering from a viral infection. He was placed on the disabled list retroactive to July 10, and another lefty reliever, **Mike Dunn**, was called up from



Triple-A Gwinnett to take his spot. O'Flaherty got sick when the Braves were in New York the last weekend before the All-Star break, and the team said it would take a couple of weeks for him to regain full strength. He was eligible to come off the DL July 25. Dunn, acquired from the Yankees in the **Javier Vasquez** deal, had a 1.05 ERA at Gwinnett with 56 strikeouts in 42 1/3 innings.

When **Jason Heyward** was activated July 15, **Brandon Hicks** was optioned to Gwinnett.

The Braves traded **Yunel Escobar** and **Jo-Jo Reyes** to Toronto July 14 in return for shortstop **Alex Gonzalez**, lefty reliever **Tim Collins** and shortstop **Tyler Pastornicky**. For more on this deal, see page 41.

On June 30, **Jair Jurrjens** (hamstring) was activated, and righthander **Cristhian Martinez** was optioned to Gwinnett. **Matt Diaz** (thumb infection/surgery) was activated from the DL June 29, and Heyward was disabled, retroactive to June 27.

Takashi Saito (hamstring) was activated from the DL June 22, and **Craig Kimbrel** was optioned to Gwinnett.

STANDLING ALONE

Chipper Jones got quite a shock June 26 when he returned to third base for the top of the eighth inning. He was left standing alone by his teammates, who remained in the dugout, allowing Chipper a moment in the spotlight after he hit a three-run homer in the bottom of the seventh to give the Braves a 3-1 lead against Detroit. The crowd gave Chipper a rousing ovation. No one confessed to orchestrating Chipper's solo moment. The Braves won the game, 4-3, giving **Kenshin Kawakami** his first victory of the season after nine losses.

HIDDEN BALL TRICK

Brooks Conrad found a groundball in the strangest place June 22 at Chicago... It was in his jersey. With two outs and no one on base in the fourth inning during the Braves' 9-6 loss to the White Sox, **Alex Rios** hit a grounder to Conrad at third base. The ball took a bad hop and "disappeared." Conrad scurried around looking for it before discovering it inside his jersey.

SHORT HOPS

Through games of July 16, **Billy Wagner** had 1,150 strikeouts, only 19 shy of **Jesse Orosco**'s record for most by a lefty relief pitcher.

OUR HITTING IS BETTER, WE DIDN'T LOSE DEFENSE

THE TRADE with Toronto to acquire Alex Gonzalez was a function of us looking at the different areas where we could improve offensively. We felt that anytime you have the chance to get into the post-season - and obviously we have a special opportunity with everything involved this year, Bobby's last season and the way our team has performed - we should do all we possibly can do to achieve that.

Shortstop was one area where we felt we could improve our offense. And with Toronto being able to send back to us a top-quality shortstop that's having a good year, it seemed to make a lot of sense. Besides Gonzalez, we also got two very solid prospects in exchange for Yunel Escobar and Jo-Jo Reyes.

I've had players that play with us and against us tell me Gonzalez is as good a shortstop as there is in the majors. He is sure-handed and has great instincts and great quickness. We didn't lose anything at all, defensively, and he's also having a great offensive year.

We also received two very solid prospects. Tim Collins is a left-handed reliever that has an outstanding curveball and changeup and also throws 92-94 and had good strikeout numbers in the Eastern League that tells you he has good stuff.

And Tyler Pastornicky, a shortstop, has great instincts, plays solid shortstop, and stole 50 bases last year (57) and has 24 this year. He really knows how to play and is getting better and better. He's maturing as a hitter.

Both of these guys are only 20 and will report to Double A, where they'll be young for the league.

We were very happy and very proud of the recognition our players received on the All-Star team. To have six players - including Billy Wagner who turned down a late chance to go - says a lot about the first half we had. When I called our guys to tell them who made the team, it was another indication of what a great group we have, because they were as happy for Omar Infante as they were for themselves.

Omar thought I was calling because he had been traded. But, naturally, he was elated. I heard later that when he started calling his family to tell them, everyone was in shock. His selection was really a lot of fun for our entire team.

In an All-Star Game, when you start running out of players, which can happen, and all of the sudden you need a guy that can do anything, Omar's your man. And he gives you great at-bats, too. I'm not sure there's another player in baseball that can do all the things he does.

I told Brian McCann it was great for the National League to win and for his hit to do it, but we also hope it matters for us (World Series home field advantage). That would mean we've had a great year.

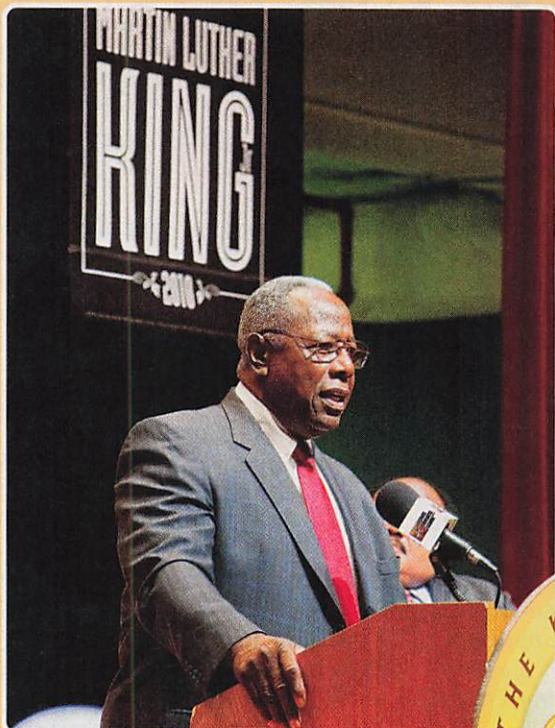
Jason Heyward now has 100 percent mobility and strength in his thumb, but it will take him a while to get his timing back. The last few weeks before he went on the DL, he was doing things differently because of the thumb. So, he's got to get his confidence back that he can attack the ball the way he normally does.

It was a little scary to have him back for four innings and then almost lose him to the wall (crashed into the wall robbing Milwaukee's Casey McGehee of a hit July 15). That would have been disastrous, but he made two huge plays in his first game back (also threw out McGehee at third in the second inning). He brings a lot more to the park than his bat.

Our road trip before the break was huge for us. To win two of three both at Philly and then at New York really set the tone for us.

" I'VE HAD PLAYERS THAT PLAY WITH US AND AGAINST US TELL ME GONZALEZ IS AS GOOD A SHORTSTOP AS THERE IS IN THE MAJORS. "

CIVIL RIGHTS GAME



POLYA DANNY/ATLANTA BRAVES

Hank Aaron speaks to the media during a press conference to announce that Major League Baseball's Civil Rights Game Weekend is coming to Atlanta the next two years.

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL announced June 30 that the Braves will host the 2011 and 2012 Civil Rights Game Weekends, a series of events developed to pay tribute to those who fought on and off the field for equal rights for all Americans. The 2011 Civil Rights Game will be a regular season Braves game at Turner Field on a yet-to-be-determined date. Atlanta, a significant location during the civil rights movement, was chosen from several competing candidates.

As home to many key leaders and organizations of the civil rights movement, and as a location for many of the movement's grassroots activities, Atlanta played a critical role in that period of American history. Several sites honoring the civil rights movement are in Atlanta, including the King Center, the official, living memorial dedicated to the advancement of the legacy of **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**, and the Carter Center, which is committed to advancing human rights and alleviating human suffering.

Among the events held during the weekend will be the MLB Beacon Awards Luncheon, which honors individuals whose lives are emblematic of the spirit of the civil rights movement. Past recipients of the MLB Beacon Award include Hall of Famers **Frank Robinson**, **Hank Aaron** and **Willie Mays**, as well as **Buck O'Neil**, **Muhammad Ali**, **Billie Jean King**, **Ruby Dee**, **Spike Lee**, **Bill Cosby**, **Harry Belafonte**, **John H. Johnson** and **Vera Clemente**. Proceeds from the MLB Beacon Awards Luncheon and other ancillary events will be donated to charity.

The 2011 Civil Rights Game Weekend will be the fifth installation of an annual event that began in Memphis in 2007. Further information on 2011 Civil Rights Game Weekend events and ticket sales will be announced later.

GLAVINE CELEBRATION

Tom Glavine will join the very select company of former Braves to have their uniform number permanently retired Aug. 6, when he also will be inducted into the Braves Hall of Fame. Glavine's number (47) will be just the seventh in franchise history to be taken out of circulation, following **Greg Maddux** (31), who received the same honor last year, along with **Hank Aaron** (44), **Eddie Mathews** (41), **Dale Murphy** (3), **Phil Niekro** (35) and **Warren Spahn** (21). The Braves also retired number 42, along with all Major League Baseball teams, to honor **Jackie Robinson**, who played his entire career with the Dodgers.

The ceremony to retire Glavine's number will take place prior to that night's game against the Giants. Glavine's induction into the Braves Hall of Fame will take place earlier Aug. 6 at a luncheon open to all fans. Tickets are \$125 and include lunch with a current or former Braves player, manager or coach. The luncheon begins at 11:30

a.m. and is preceded by a silent auction at 10:45. For information about luncheon tickets, call (404) 614-2310.

ROGER THAT

Roger McDowell took on a new type of pitching pupil July 13 when he gave some pointers to teen heartthrob actor/singer **Zac Efron** in Atlanta. Efron was at the **Dan Perez** Baseball Camp at Murphey Candler Park to promote his new movie, "Charlie St. Cloud." Efron signed autographs and played catch with campers and fans. In the movie, Efron plays a youngster who uses his love of baseball to help him deal with his brother's death in a car accident.

POPULARITY POLL

In spite of no longer having games televised nationally on TBS, the Braves remain

the third most-popular team in Major League Baseball and the most popular team in the National League, according to a Harris Interactive Poll of baseball fans. It's the second straight year the Braves have ranked third, and they are the only team other than the Yankees to be in Harris' top three every year since the rating began in 1999. The Yankees and Red Sox are 1-2 this year.

PLAN AHEAD

MLB.com is offering fans the opportunity now to buy post-season tickets at face value. Postseason Ticket Reservations is a new feature intended to broaden potential access to these seats, ensuring fans that if the Braves play in a game they reserve, they will be able to buy a face-value ticket. For example, if you purchase a Division Series Home Game 1 reservation for the



Braves and they qualify for the post-season, your reservation would allow you to purchase a ticket for the first home Division Series game at Turner Field. The cost for each transaction is \$10 for the Division Series, \$15 for the League Championship Series and \$20 for the World Series. The maximum purchase for each game is two reservations per household per team per series. So, it would cost \$90 now to reserve two tickets for one game of all three possible post-season rounds, as an example.

If the Braves play in the post-season game for which you purchased a reservation, you will be guaranteed the chance to buy tickets for that game at the face value price. Go to mlb.com, then highlight the tickets tab and select "postseason ticket reservations" to participate.

A REAL CLASSIC

Jason Heyward made a guest appearance at the second annual Atlanta Braves Youth Baseball Classic July 17 at the Atlanta Braves Baseball Academy. Thirty-two youth teams from around the Southeast competed in four age divisions during the weekend. Additionally, players competed in skills competitions, including a home run derby, and they also attended a Braves game. Heyward had his picture taken with all the participating teams. All participants received an official Atlanta Braves Youth Baseball Classic t-shirt, gift bag and commemorative medal.

BALLS & STRIKES

A The Braves Wives held a Christmas in July toy drive July 15-16 at Turner Field. Fans donating toys received a replica Braves cap and were entered in a raffle to win autographed items. The toys will be distributed to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta locations.

A **Takashi Saito** was among players greeting fans at the Toco Hills Publix July 16 in the Shop With the Braves promotion.

A **Matt Diaz** signed autographs at the Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center July 17.

A Country music star **Sara Evans** will perform a free concert after the game Aug. 7 at Turner Field.

OUR PLAYERS LOVED INFANTE'S SELECTION

I WAS REALLY PROUD that five of our players were picked to play in the All-Star Game for the National League. Jason Heyward was selected by the fans. So was Martin Prado, and he got to start because of Chase Utley being on the disabled list. That was so deserving. He's been our spark plug.

There's a lot of respect for Brian McCann throughout the league. He's a pure baseball player and will always get the support of his fellow players. Then (manager) Charlie Manuel chose a couple more of our guys, Tim Hudson, who has been lights out. I haven't seen Huddy pitch this well - ever. Not even with Oakland.

And Charlie picked Omar Infante, which went over really well in our clubhouse. Our players love Omar. He's a great guy on the bench and has meant so much to our team.

Major League Baseball told the managers they needed to pick a utility player, and I know Charlie looked at a bunch. He couldn't have picked any better than Infante, though. He can play just about every position, and he's a solid pinch-hitter who'll give you good at-bats.

I know there was discussion about other players being more deserving. The tough part of All-Star Games is that you'll never be able to recognize everyone. Several years ago, managers were allowed to start selecting relief pitchers, so finally the relievers were getting recognized. Now it's time for the utility guys to get some recognition. I think it's good for the game.

At the beginning of the season, Charlie got in touch with me to offer a spot on the All-Star coaching staff. I sure appreciate him thinking of me, but at my age, I'd rather have the three days off with my family. I also think it's time for other guys to get their chance to coach at an All-Star Game.

We had an exciting first half, a bunch of highs and lows, but our team is playing well right now. We want to get all our injured players healthy, but that's going to happen. We can't rush it. Heyward's thumb took some time to get better, and we wanted him to have every opportunity to test it before he came back.

I think the level of play in the NL East is such that we're going to go down to the wire, to the finish. It's going to be exciting in August and September, and there's nothing we can do to prepare for it but play one game at a time.

We've seen outstanding pitching performances in our games and all over major league baseball. I think the level of pitching has gotten better. It's a cycle that took a while to come back. The last expansion in baseball diluted the pitching for a number of years, but teams are developing pitchers.

I was happy to see Billy Wagner earn his 400th save back in June. He's been a great addition to our team, lights out, really, like we expected. He's a great teammate, and it's been a pleasure to have him in the clubhouse. Who knows? Maybe we can talk him out of retiring at the end of the season! Not really. I know he's like me. He's made up his mind, and now he can keep racking up saves and maybe pass John Franco's left-handed saves mark (424).

The fans have definitely had an impact on our team. We like playing in front of our fans at Turner Field, because they can get loud!

Certainly Jason Heyward has been a big part of that. People like watching a young rising star. But being in first place didn't hurt! It's a team that the fans like. They know we've got guys who never quit. They're going to play hard until the last out of the regular season. And hopefully another month after that!

" I HAVEN'T SEEN HUDDY PITCH THIS WELL - EVER. NOT EVEN WITH OAKLAND. "

PLAYING PEPPER

JONNY VENTERS



A 30th-round draft pick in 2003, the 25-year-old Venters opened the season at Triple-A but quickly became a mainstay in the Atlanta bullpen after his April 17 callup.

INTERVIEW BY
PATTY RASMUSSEN

CHOPTALIK: Why do you wear your socks high?

JONNY VENTERS: I started doing it in college (Indian River, Fla., Community College) because they didn't have pants that were long enough. When I first signed, we weren't allowed to wear our pants long. We had to wear them up, and I got used to it. I liked it. One time I wore my pants down and I hurt my elbow.

CT: You're the best-kept secret in baseball. Where did you come from?

VENTERS: I was drafted by the Braves out of high school in 2003. My first full season was 2005. I went to my first spring training and then went to Rome. I piggy-backed the whole year with another guy. I'd start a game, and then the other guy would start and I'd come out of the bullpen. I threw 100 innings and then blew my elbow out. I had Tommy John surgery at the end of that year, October. I missed the entire next season (2006) and three weeks of the following season (2007). Then I threw about 80 innings and hurt my arm again, missed the last month.

CT: Were you starting to think, "What is going on here?"

VENTERS: Yeah, it was getting kind of ridiculous. I took the whole off-season off and came back in the spring (2008), and it was still not right. I didn't break camp. I stayed in Orlando for the first three months of the season. It was rehab. My elbow was hurting, and it wouldn't get better. It ended up being flexor tendinitis. I went to Birmingham (Ala.) and got a cortisone shot from Dr. (James) Andrews, and it's been fine ever since.

CT: That must have been some shot.

VENTERS: (Laughs) Yeah, it didn't feel real good! But afterward, I threw about five innings at the Gulf Coast League, 15 innings at Myrtle Beach and another 15 or so in Mississippi. I pitched about a month and a half that year.

CT: You're known for a particularly good sinking two-seam fastball. Where did you learn it?

VENTERS: I always just threw up, but when I first signed with the Braves, I wasn't allowed to throw it. I think they really want-

2008. That's when I threw it in the playoffs. Next spring training (2009), people were saying "You need to throw that. That's your pitch." I was in Double-A for the first couple of months. I threw the sinker a lot and it was good, but I wasn't consistent. I got called up to Triple-A in June and started struggling. I couldn't throw it for a strike early in the count, so I was getting behind a lot.

CT: Did you change your approach at that point?

VENTERS: I wanted to, but I kept throwing it and throwing it, and the pitching coach there (Botelho at Gwinnett) and (special assistant to the GM) Dom Chiti are always telling me to trust my stuff. I think I was trying to make that perfect pitch... make that sinker go instead of just throwing it and letting it do what it does. I think that's the difference between this year and last year.

CT: Confidence? If so, where did it come from? Was it just maturity?

VENTERS: Yeah, a lot to do with confidence. I think I came into camp without any expectations, just wanting to make a good impression. Bobby Cox watched me throw a bullpen, and he said something about my sinker being good. I was, like, "Bobby Cox said my sinker was good! That's pretty cool!" (Laughs) When you hear someone

"YOU KNOW, I JUST KIND OF GRAB AND THROW IT (SINKER). I DIDN'T TRY TO MAKE IT MY PITCH UNTIL LAST YEAR."

ed us to learn to command the four-seamer and didn't want us relying on the two-seamer. When I came back (from the injury), I was in Myrtle Beach. I was older and wasn't doing too good, so I just thought I'd start throwing it again. My pitching coach was (the late) Bruce Dal Canton. He was awesome. You know, I just kind of grab and throw it. I didn't try to make it my pitch until last year (2009) and the pitching coach (Derek Botelho) said it was good. He was my pitching coach my first season at Double-A,

like that say that the pitch is good, it gives you a little more confidence to go out there and go right at guys with it.

CT: Did Roger McDowell work with you at all on it at spring training?

VENTERS: He told me to throw the sinker my first outing. I think Clint Sammons was catching me and (Roger) told Clint, "He's throwing all sinkers."

That's what I did. I went after guys with it and fortunately, it worked. I just let it rip. Try to get it over the plate and get swings early.

CT: Your lefty bullpen mates, Billy Wagner and Eric O'Flaherty, talked about how they'll discuss how to approach certain batters, but their advice to you was that you don't need to worry about approach. You need to just throw your stuff. How has it been in the bullpen? It looks like there's a lot of good camaraderie.

VENTERS: Yeah, they'll be talking and I'm trying to listen in and learn some stuff, but they'll say, "Don't even listen, just throw that sinker." So, that's what I've been doing. Everybody has been really helpful in every aspect, being my first time in the bullpen.

When I first got here, from day one, they were helping me adjust, telling me how to warm up, how to play catch, and how to go at guys. They've all been great. It's a good group of guys, and we all know we're going to get the job done. We have a lot of confidence in each other and our team.

CT: You were born in Kentucky (Pikeville), but grew up in Florida, right?

VENTERS: Yes, I moved to Orlando when I was a year old. I lived in a suburb of Orlando, Altamonte Springs, and went to Lake Brantley High School.

CT: And that's where you met your wife, Viviana?

VENTERS: Yes, she was a good friend of my sister, who is a year older than me. They played basketball together. They were sophomores, I was a freshman, and we started dating. She probably wouldn't want me to tell you, but she asked me out.

CT: Were you shy?

VENTERS: Oh yeah, scared to death, because I liked her and she knew I liked her. So, she just asked me out. She was 15 and I was 14, so our parents probably drove us somewhere for our first date (laughs)!

CT: How long have you been married?

VENTERS: Two and a half years. We dated all through high school, and she went to the University of Florida. I was still in high school, so we took a break but eventually got back together. She's an interior designer, working at a firm in downtown Atlanta. She was working for the same company in Orlando, and they allowed her to transfer to their firm up here.

CT: Where do you live in Atlanta?

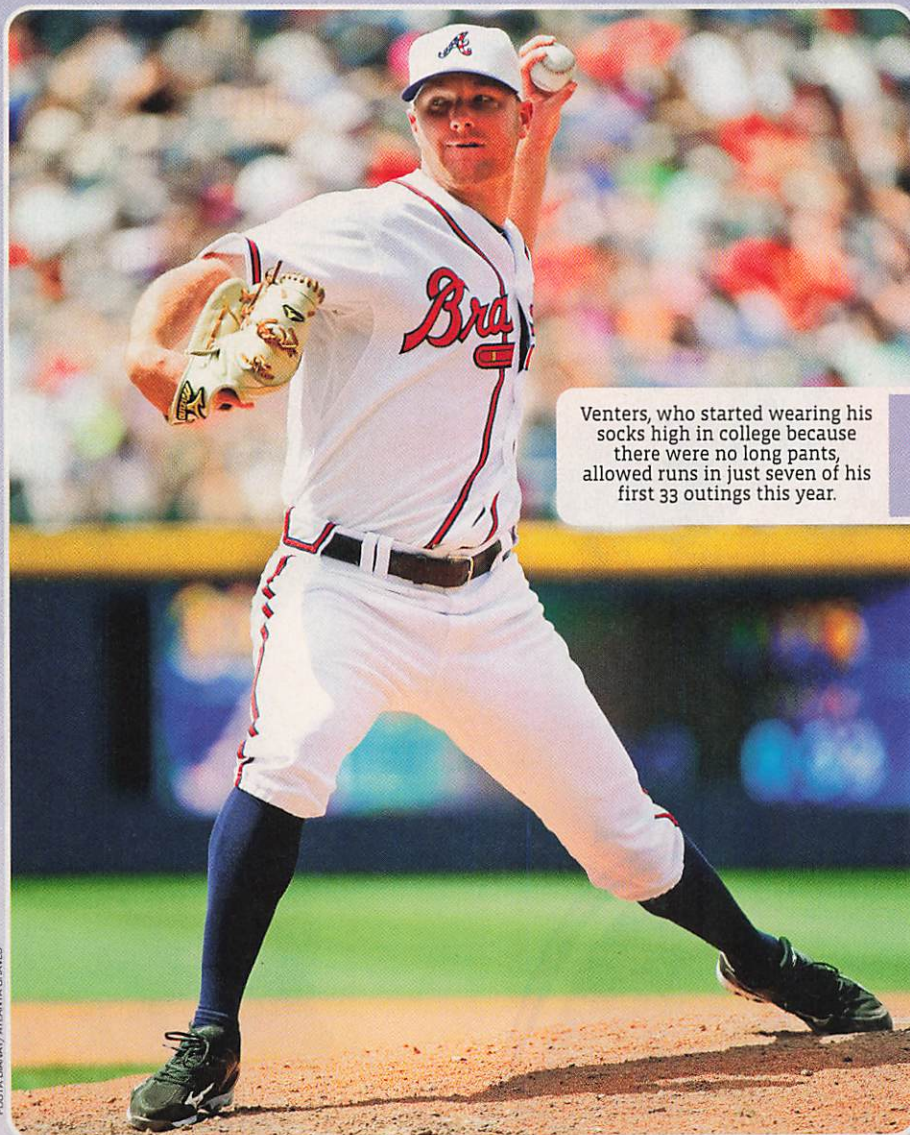
VENTERS: We live in a townhouse in Dunwoody. It's a nice area. We like Atlanta, but we're trying to get adjusted to the traffic. We'd like to buy a house and make it our home.

CT: How do you and Viviana unwind?

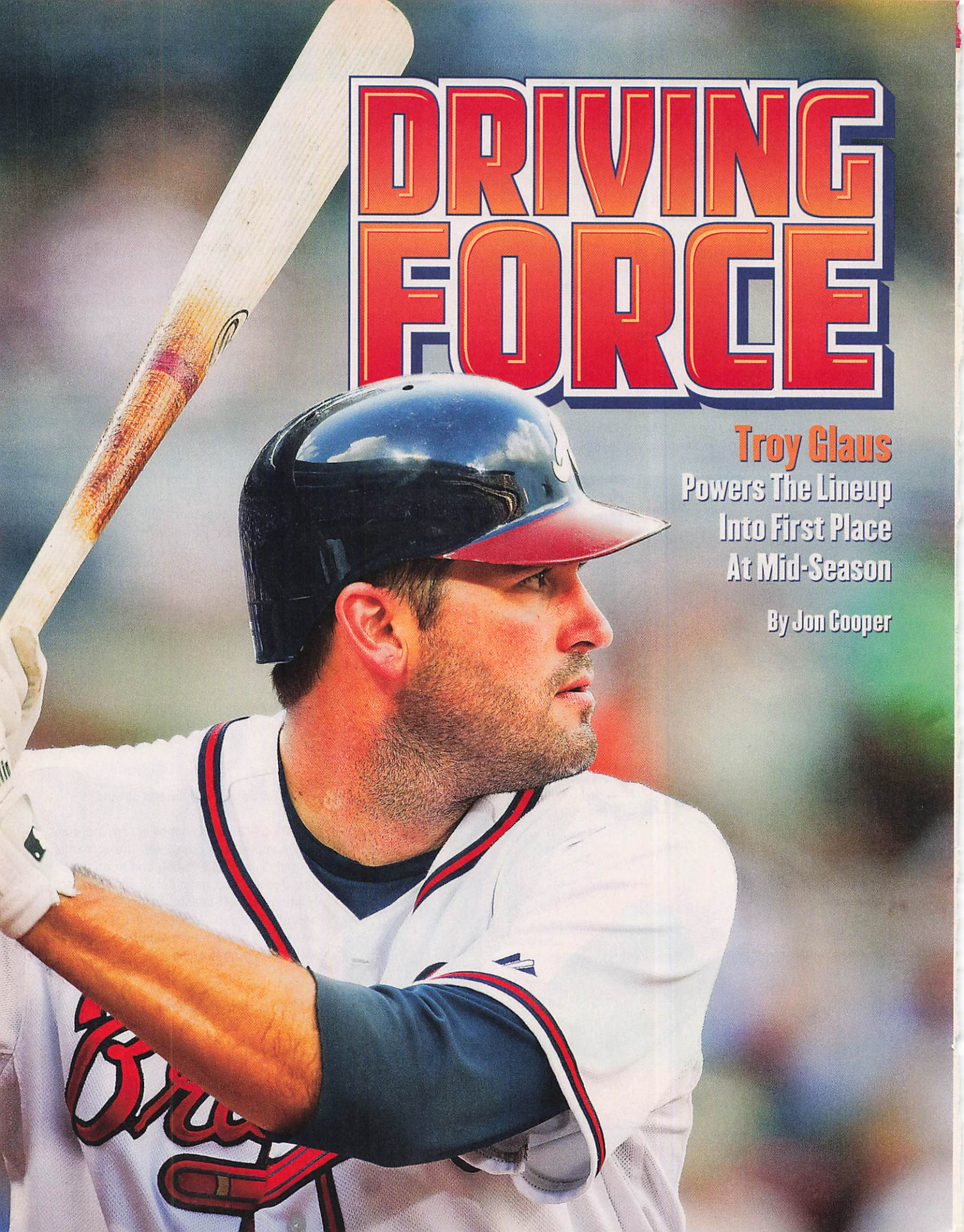
VENTERS: We like movies. I'm more an action movie guy. She likes the romantic comedy type. I like to fish and hunt, which she doesn't like as much. I did take her hunting this off-season in north Georgia, and she had fun. We didn't get anything. I was falling asleep in the stand, but she was locked in trying to see something.

CT: What was your favorite team growing up?

VENTERS: I liked the Braves. You couldn't miss them since they were always on TV at the time, and they were good. Being from Kentucky, originally my whole family liked the Cincinnati Reds. They're the closest team.



Venters, who started wearing his socks high in college because there were no long pants, allowed runs in just seven of his first 33 outings this year.



DRIVING FORCE

Troy Glaus

Powers The Lineup
Into First Place
At Mid-Season

By Jon Cooper

The words "didn't see that coming" have rarely been used to describe Troy Glaus and his success on the baseball field.

He was a high school (Carlsbad, Calif.) and college (UCLA) all-American, an Olympic medalist ('96 Games in Atlanta), a No. 3 draft pick (Angels in 1997), a four-time All-Star, two-time Silver Slugger winner and even a World Series MVP (2002).

Yet many people didn't see Glaus' 2010 season coming.

The 33-year-old native of Tarzana, Calif., is making a compelling case for Comeback Player of the Year, thanks to his stats at the midpoint of the season. He was in the National League's top 10 in RBIs (56) and walks (45), in the top 30 in on-base percentage (.364) and in the top 40 in runs scored (41) while being a driving force behind the Braves' pursuit of their first playoff berth since 2005.

In the Atlanta clubhouse, it's not far-fetched to throw his name out for MVP consideration.

"He carried us for a while, driving in runs and doing the things that help us win and getting us those runs our pitchers need," said David Ross. "I'd like to see how many times he's driven in the first run that we got, which is always a big one."

A look at those numbers shows that in the Braves' first 81 games, Glaus drove in the team's first run 10 times (Atlanta was 7-3 in those games). In addition, 13 of Glaus' RBIs at that point had tied or put the Braves

who had career 162-game averages of 35 homers and 102 RBIs and who hit .270 in 2008, with 147 hits, including 33 doubles, 27 homers and 99 RBIs. He also drew 87 walks, which he last accomplished in 2002, when he was named World Series MVP after hitting .385 with three homers, three doubles, eight RBIs, seven runs to lead the Angels over the Giants in seven games.

The Glaus the Braves' front office saw is the one that Braves fans have seen for most of the first half.

"We got a quality baseball player when we picked him up this off-season," said Brian McCann. "He's carried this team for an extended period of time."

That period began on May 1 on the heels of a frustrating April, during which Glaus batted only .194, .185 with runners in scoring position, while stranding 47 runners, 26 of them in scoring position.

"He was getting asked by reporters every day, 'What's going on? What's going on?'" recalled Peter Moylan. "I knew that eventually it was going to turn around. He's been around the game long enough where he knows that you're going to have your ups and downs, and I think he handled it perfectly. He answered all the critics by the way he responded in May."

In May, Glaus was named National League Player of the Month, batting .330 (34 for 103), with nine extra-base hits, including six homers and a league-high 28 RBIs. The Braves went 20-8, moving from last place in the NL East to the best record in the National League.

It turns out that May has historically been one of Glaus' most productive months. He came into 2010 with 236 hits and 59 homers in May throughout his career, his highs for any month.

"This game is so cyclical," Glaus said. "Nobody's hot for six straight months. You're always going to have your ebbs and flows. I guess during May over my career, it's been up."

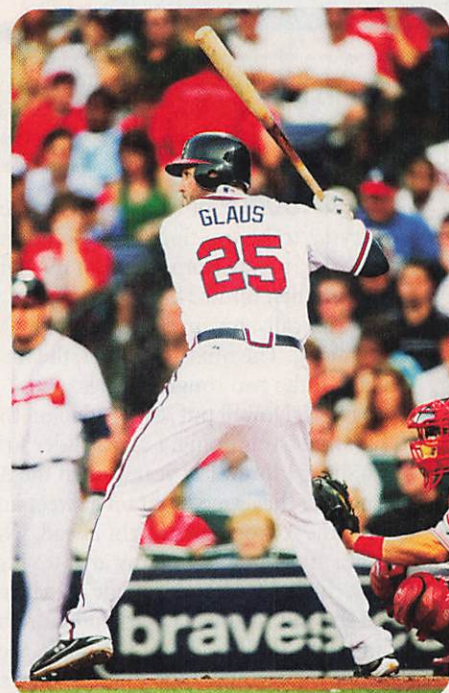


ahead, and he was hitting .300 with runners in scoring position and .429 with runners at second and third. With two out, Glaus was hitting .400 with runners in scoring position and .471 with a runner at third.

It's a pretty handsome payoff for what was seen as a calculated risk when the team signed Glaus to a one-year free-agent contract last Jan. 5.

At that time, Glaus was 33 and coming off a 2009 season in which he played a career-low 14 games following right shoulder surgery and complications during rehab, batting only .172.

But Braves management saw a slugger



After a sluggish April, Glaus came alive at the plate, winning NL Player of the Month honors for May and also developing into a dependable fielder (below) in his first season at first base.

But he didn't stop in May. Glaus finished June ranked fourth in the NL in RBIs (56) and tied for fifth in walks (45), while leading the team in homers (14), and ranking first in multi-RBI games (18) and third in multi-hit games (18).

Glaus is on pace for 29 homers and a career-best 115 RBIs — the kind of run production that hasn't been seen in Atlanta from a first baseman, especially a right-handed-hitting one, since Andres Galarraga hit 44 homers with 121 RBIs in 1998. Such big numbers aren't a surprise to those who know him.

"I remember going up against him when he was in Anaheim," said Tim Hudson, who has held Glaus to a .175 average with 19 strikeouts and only one homer. "He's a legit power threat, a professional hitter. He goes up there with an approach. He's pretty prepared, he understands the pitcher and what the pitcher's trying to do to get him out."

"The year I played with him, he had an unbelievable year," added Eric Hinske, who teamed with Glaus at Toronto for part of 2006, Glaus' last 100-RBI season. "I think he had 23 or 24 home runs at the All-Star break [finished with 38], he was an All-Star, he just played his butt off the whole year. He's a big presence in the middle of the lineup."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



I NEED TO FIND A WAY TO MINIMIZE DAMAGE

I HAD A COUPLE of rough starts in June, to say the least. I think mentally I was trying to be too fine. I was trying to make perfect pitches when I didn't have to. I got away from what got me here, which was being aggressive. If they can hit it, then hit it. That's always been my mentality. I got away from that.

Mechanically, my arm was a little bit too low, which made my pitches flatten out a bit. The mixture of that, the mental side and the mechanical side, are why I had the two rough outings.

Roger McDowell put some video on the split screen for me and made it easy to see what I was doing. I saw a slider I threw against the Tigers in June, and I saw a slider I threw last year against the Astros, and it was totally different. The one against the Tigers went on a sweeping plane from right to left, and the one against the Astros was straight ahead, which I want.

It was from not getting my arm up high enough. As soon as he showed me that, it made sense, and it made it that much easier to adjust.

He showed me the video right before my bullpen session for my next outing against the Marlins (July 3). I made the adjustment in the bullpen, and the results were like night and day from the start against the Tigers. It was just two days later, but as soon as I saw what I was doing, I remembered, "Oh yeah, it used to be that as soon as my leg went down, I'd put my hand out (to the side)."

I think it's easier for me to make adjustments after I see them. Someone can tell me what I'm doing wrong, but until I see it, it's difficult to visualize it. Before

I make every pitch, I run through my head where the pitch is going to start and where it's going to end. I already visualize the pitch before I throw it. If I can pitch it in my head, I think, for the most part, I can do it.

John Smoltz had one of the best sliders ever, and that's my main pitch. So, I threw a side session with him before the Detroit

game and just worked on a couple of things with my slider. It helped.

I got what he was saying, but until I got my arm up, I wasn't going to get it right. Nothing was going to help. I think that was the biggest issue. I had to get my arm up. At the time he worked with me, I still hadn't seen the arm angle problem, so what he was telling me wasn't going to fix it.

Now that I have it figured out, I've been able to incorporate the things he said. A lot of what he told me is technique, mechanics, the fine points of throwing a slider. When my slider is good, it goes top to bottom rather than a sweeping slider or a cutter. Being tall is an advantage for me when my slider is on.

I think overall I'm pleased with where I am at this point. I had three rough outings, but those are going to happen. I need to find a way to minimize them. Those three games, as far as numbers go, really killed me, but overall I think we're here to win. I want to help the team win, and I've done that every start besides those three, and even the start in Cincinnati we came back to win.

The most frustrating thing was that when I was doing badly, we were playing well and I wasn't helping the team. I felt bad and was mad. It made it sting that much more. I'm glad I realized the adjustments I needed to make, because we are playing really good, and it's awesome. Everybody gets along, and it's a fun team.

When the team lost nine in a row, it was still so early in the season, no one really panicked. At that time Troy Glaus was crushing balls right at people. We were playing well but losing. That's going to happen. You're going to have bad luck here and there.

But since that time, we've been playing some really good baseball. It's a lot of fun to be in our clubhouse.

In 2010, that presence can be counted on every day.

Glaus was the only Brave to play in all 79 games (75 starts) heading into July, and his first day off didn't come until July 3, the team's 81st game.

In the field, he's also been a pleasant surprise, appearing more comfortable at first base than someone who had played only six career games there before 2010.

Heading into play July 4, Glaus was fielding a respectable .991 with six errors — better on both counts than Ryan Howard and the man he replaced in Atlanta, Adam LaRoche, and only two percentage points behind three-time Gold Glove Todd Helton, and Glaus had 94 more chances than Helton.

"He's exceeded my expectations over at first," said McCann. "He's turned himself into a really good defensive first baseman."

Armed with a dedicated work ethic ingrained in him by his mother, who raised him after his parents divorced when he was young, Glaus has made the deceptively difficult adjustment.

"For 13 years of my baseball career, every groundball and every line drive hooked to my right. Now every line drive and groundball hooks to my left," he pointed out. "Just seeing the ball coming off a different way is difficult to adjust to, and that takes nothing but time and reps and seeing it in games. It's getting better."

Adjusting to his new teammates was a lot easier.

"He comes across to some people as having a hard exterior to crack, but from the minute I got introduced to him in spring training, I felt like what is underneath the hard exterior is really, really, really good," said Moylan, Glaus' locker neighbor to the left. "We have our sessions before the game where we're all sitting around and having a laugh and a joke. He gets pretty loud then, but generally he's a quiet guy that likes to take care of himself."

"He's just a good overall dude," added Ross, his locker neighbor to the right. "He never gets too high, he never gets too low."

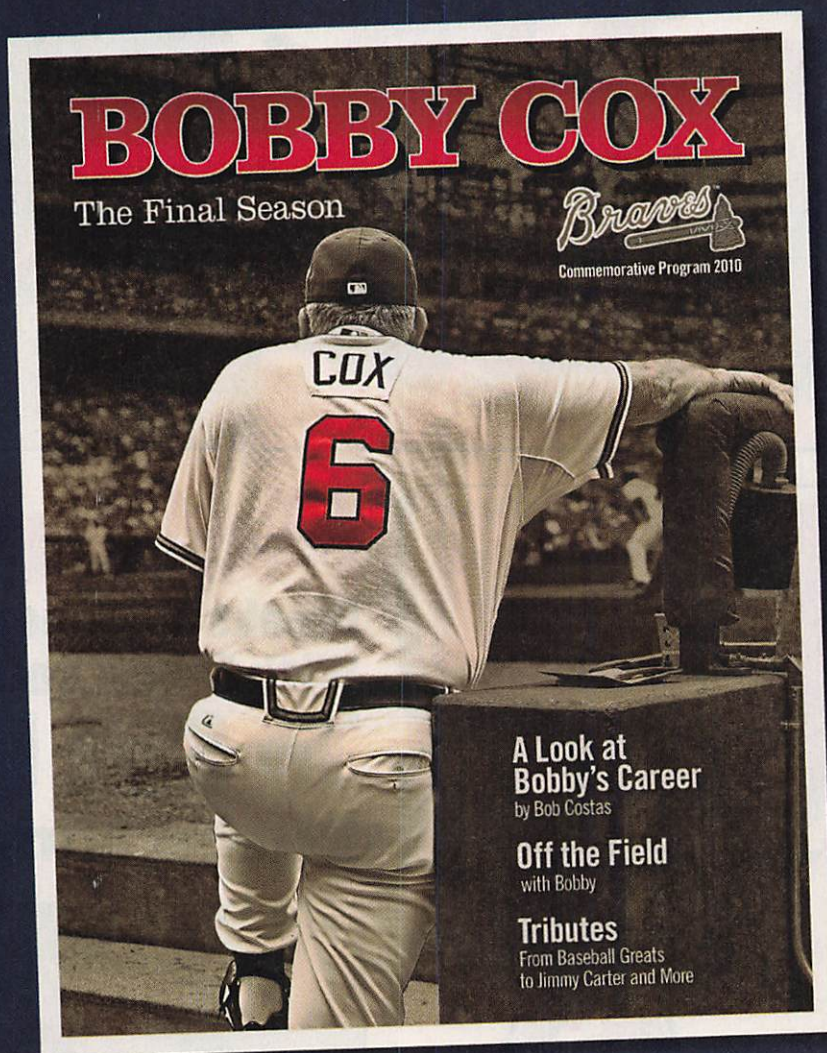
Glaus finds the chemistry of this year's Braves similar to that of some of the successful Angels teams he played on.

"First and foremost, it's trying to go out and win a ballgame and get to the playoffs again," he said. "For the guys who haven't had that opportunity, the most fun you'll ever have is playing in the playoffs. I've been fortunate to do it three times. Hopefully, this year will be four."

THE MOST FRUSTRATING THING WAS THAT WHEN I WAS DOING BADLY, WE WERE PLAYING WELL AND I WASN'T HELPING...

BOBBY COX

COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAM



-
- Feature article by Bob Costas
 - Bobby's life off the field
 - Tributes to Bobby from former and current players and coaches as well as Elton John, Tony LaRussa and President Jimmy Carter
-

**Celebrate Bobby Cox's 25th and final season
as the Braves' Skipper**

Available throughout the ballpark or by calling 404.523.5854.
Be sure to pick up a piece of Braves history today!



The first Brave ever to make the NL All-Star team in each of his first five seasons, McCann lashes his game-winning double (below) and then tells the media how he did it.

McVVP!

BY GARY CARUSO

OFFICIALLY, the scoreboard read: National League 3, American League 1.

Unofficially, it also read: Brian McCann 3, American League 1.

If this season of promise continues to develop as it has, eventually leading the Braves to a very big series in late October, McCann's three-run double with two outs in the top of the seventh inning of the 81st All-Star Game at Angels Stadium in Anaheim will loom even bigger.

As it is, McCann's clutch double off a 98-mph fastball from nasty White Sox lefty reliever Matt Thornton enabled the NL to break the AL's 12-game stranglehold (2002 ended in a tie) on the All-Star Game that began in 1997. Thus, the National League team that advances to the World Series will enjoy home-field advantage for the first time since that distinction was first awarded the All-Star Game winner in 2003.

The last NL win was in 1996 when Bobby Cox managed a 6-0 victory, his lone win in five All-Star games.



McCann Breaks AL Monopoly With 3-Run Double To Set Up October Intrigue





STEPHEN DUNN/GETTY IMAGES

Omar Infante was selected to the All-Star team to give the NL a utilityman capable of playing almost any position, possibly even "re-entering" the game under a new rule that was implemented.

"This is something you dream about," said McCann. "To be in a situation like that, just to be in a game like this, to share a locker room with these guys. As a kid, this is what you dream about when you play baseball. It's a moment I'll never forget. Tonight I was just lucky enough to be in a situation to come through."

McCann was one of five Braves chosen for the NL All-Star team. His hit was the first in five All-Star at-bats.

Jason Heyward, Tim Hudson, Martin Prado and Omar Infante were the other Braves on manager Charlie Manuel's (Phillies) roster. Billy Wagner turned down a last-minute invitation.

Heyward finished second in fan voting among NL outfielders. He declined to play because he's recovering from a thumb sprain that put him on the disabled list prior to the game. He was the 22nd rookie to be named an All-Star starter. Heyward, who turns 21 Aug. 9, was the first Braves rookie to be named a starter since catcher Greg Olson in 1990 and also the first Braves rookie since Olsen to be an All-Star. Righthander Ron Reed is the only other Braves rookie to be an All-Star (1968).

Hudson and Infante did not get into the game, but Prado was the starting second baseman - replacing injured Chase Utley (Philadelphia) - and was 0-for-3 with two groundouts and a flyout. It was Hudson's third All-Star selection (2000, '04 with Oakland) and the first for Prado and Infante.

Yadier Molina of the Cardinals won the fan voting as the starting catcher. McCann

entered a scoreless game as a pinch-hitter for Molina in the fifth inning and nearly got the NL on the board when he hit a deep flyball to right off Detroit's Justin Verlander that was caught on the warning track with two outs and two men on base. He remained in the game the rest of the way, delivering the game-winning double in his only other at-bat.

Manuel was not the least bit surprised by McCann's hit.

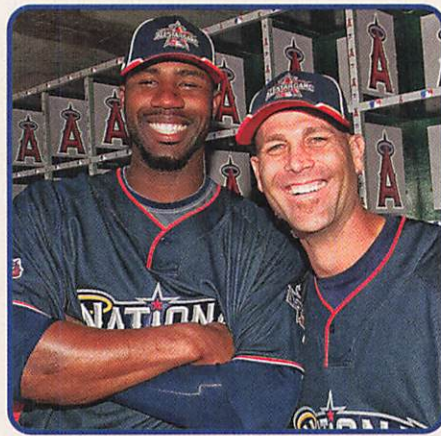
"(He) absolutely kills us," said Manuel. "I was sitting there on the bench and the guy (Thornton) threw him a fastball, and he threw him a low fastball. I told (San Francisco manager and NL coach) Bruce Bochy - and (San Diego manager and NL coach) Bud Black was standing there - I said, 'I hope he keeps the ball down and hard, because this guy can light him up.' He threw him a low fastball, and he clocked him!"

For the record, Manuel wasn't just blowing smoke. McCann has 12 of his career 101 home runs against the Phillies, and his 55 career RBIs against them is the most damage he's done against any team.

"Thornton has one of the best left-handed fastballs in the game," said McCann of the pitcher he victimized by pulling a sharp drive to right field. "I sat on the fastball and tried to get my hands going a little early. I got a pitch to handle, and luckily, I didn't miss it."

Asked about the significance of the home field advantage in the World Series, McCann said, "It means more to me, a little bit, than years past, because we're in first place... Home field advantage is exactly that - it's an advantage."

All National League contenders can thank McCann for that now. Come late October, perhaps McCann's own team and its fans will be the most thankful of all.



TIM DONOHUE

Jason Heyward, the youngest player chosen for the All-Star Game, didn't play due to injury but still took part in the festivities and mugged with Tim Hudson for the ChopTalk camera.

Two McVPs!



McCANN

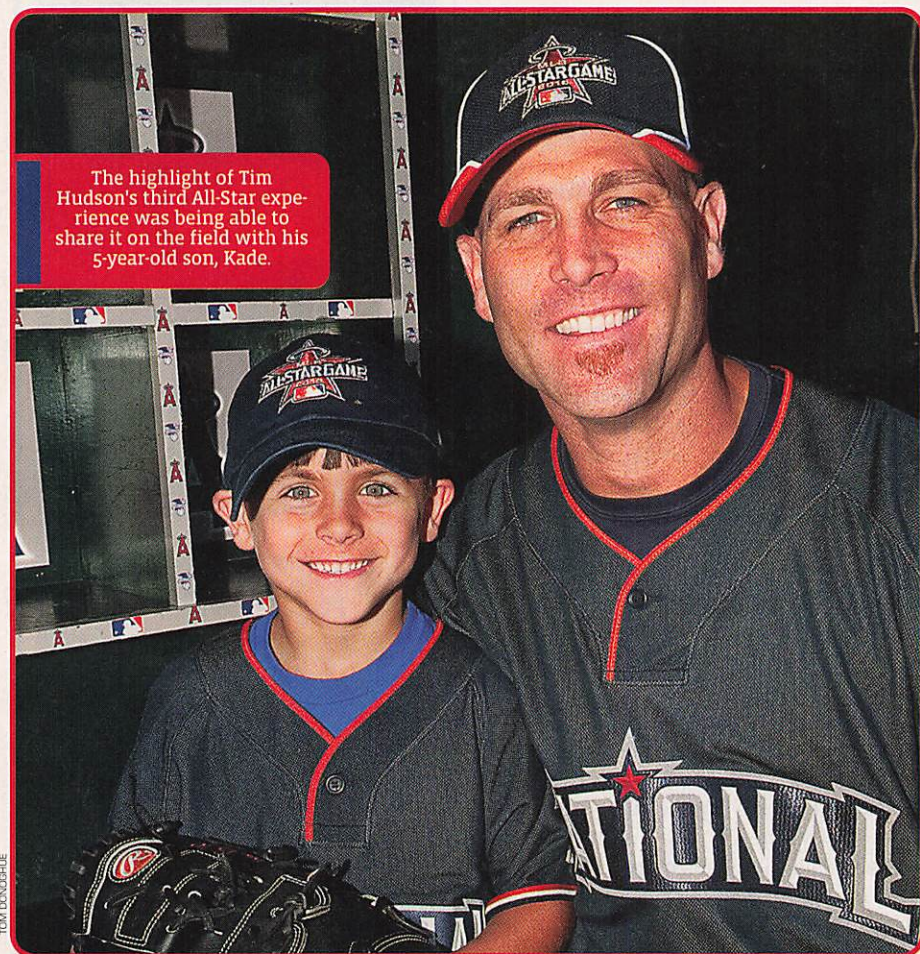
BRIAN MCCANN is just the second Braves player to be named MVP of the All-Star Game, joining Fred McGriff (above), who won it in 1994. McGriff delivered a two-run, pinch-hit home run in the ninth inning to tie a game, 7-7, that the NL won, 8-7, in 10 innings.

The MVP, now known as the Ted Williams Most Valuable Player, receives the Arch Ward Trophy. The trophy is named in honor of Arch Ward, the late Chicago Tribune sports editor who convinced baseball officials that a game between the best players in the two leagues would be a popular attraction at the 1933 World's Fair in Chicago. The MVP Award is given in the name of the late Hall of Famer Ted Williams, an 18-time All-Star.

Selection of the MVP is made by the broadcast rights holders - FOX, ESPN Radio, and Major League Baseball International - the Baseball Writers Association of America, and through on-line balloting conducted by MLB.com. The on-line balloting began in the sixth inning.

An official from the National Baseball Hall of Fame collected the black bat McCann used on his game-winning hit to take it to Cooperstown.

What A Difference A Year Makes...



BY GARY CARUSO

WHEN TIM HUDSON popped out of the tunnel into the first base dugout at Angels Stadium for the National League workout July 12, his 5-year-old son, Kade, was right by his side. It was hard to tell who was more excited about that moment, Hudson, who had been looking forward to it for years, or Kade, who was wide-eyed and grinning from ear-to-ear.

The only hitch in Kade's giddy-up was getting used to that *funny* NL warmup jersey he was wearing...

"I remember when I made the All-Star team with Oakland the first time (2000) and some of the older guys were down there with their sons," said Hudson. "I really envied team and hoped I could do that someday. So, when I made the team this year, I bought Kade a batting practice jersey with 'National' on the front.

"He's really excited about this, but when I gave him the jersey, he said, 'Dad, we don't play for the Nationals!' He's 5 years old. He

doesn't really know the American League and National League. He just knows a team we play against called the Nationals."

Kade figured it out pretty fast, though, and his dad had fun showing him the ropes the day before the big game in Anaheim.

While Hudson was excited to have his young son by his side, he also was thrilled by how far he's come in such a short period of time. What a difference a year made for him, as well as for three other Braves All-Stars - Martin Prado, Omar Infante and Jason Heyward.

On July 13, 2009, a year to the day before this year's All-Star Game, Hudson was preparing to make his first rehab start at Myrtle Beach after having elbow reconstructive surgery the previous August. He didn't know if he'd be a successful major league pitcher again, let alone an All-Star caliber pitcher.

Prado, the starting second baseman for the National League All-Stars, was barely an everyday starter for the Braves a year

earlier... Infante, like Hudson, wasn't even playing a year ago, because he was on the disabled list with a broken right hand... and Heyward, though a top prospect that played in the Futures Game the day before the All-Star Game in St. Louis, had barely been promoted to Double-A Mississippi (July 4).

"Last year at this time, I was getting ready to go to Myrtle Beach," said Hudson, who made his first of six rehab starts July 19. He was still a month and a half away from a major league mound.

"It's very satisfying to be here after wondering if I'd ever pitch again. I hope this is my third of four or five All-Star Games before I'm finished," added Hudson, who turned 35 the day after the All-Star Game. "Even in rehab, I didn't feel 100 percent. I didn't feel 100 percent until this spring.

"Every year you pitch, the wear and tear causes your range of motion to change. You don't notice it, because it's gradual over time. Now, after a year off, having elbow surgery and being able to rehabilitate my shoulder at the same time, I feel like I'm recharged. I'm able to get my arm places I haven't been able to go since 2000, 2001. My sinker is better. I can throw it like I did when I was 21 or 22. I hate to say any surgery is a blessing, but in a way, this was for me."

Hudson, 9-4 at the break, had a 2.30 ERA, sixth in the NL. He led the Braves with 13 quality starts (6 innings or more of 3 or fewer runs), and 11 of his 18 starts were seven innings or longer, including four of eight innings.

Then there's Prado, who led the NL in hit-



The NL's leading hitter at the All-Star break, Martin Prado (R), chats with Cardinals star Albert Pujols during the NL workout the day before the game.



ting at the break (.325) and also led the majors in hits (121) and multi-hit games (40). He began 2009 as a reserve, but when starting second baseman Kelly Johnson struggled through much of the first half, Prado took over the everyday job and the Braves have been winning ever since. Even though he was told he'd be the regular second baseman this year, he worked hard in the off-season to get even stronger and better.

"This is what can happen in baseball when you work hard," said the 26-year-old Prado. "Things change all the time, so you have to keep working. It's all very hard for me to believe, but at the same time, I know I worked for it. I'm very proud to be here, and I'm going to enjoy it and get to know these guys. I hope to get some tips that will help me get better."

Prado was the first Braves second baseman to start for the National League since Marcus Giles in 2003.

Infante, of course, was one of the biggest stories of the selections since he's not even a regular at any position for the Braves. However, NL manager Charlie Manuel explained that managers were urged to pick a utility type player so, if necessary, they could take advantage of the new All-Star Game "re-entry" rule that allows for one player that has left the game to go back in, if there's a need. Infante, 28, was a perfect pick, because he can play every infield and outfield position, plus he was hitting a robust .332 at the break.

"He deserves to be here," said All-Star Game MVP Brian McCann. "The 24 Braves that get the chance to watch him play every day know he deserves to be here as much as anyone does. He can play seven positions and he can really hit the ball, too. Anyone that says he doesn't belong here doesn't know what they're talking about. He is so valuable to our team."

Infante suffered a broken fifth metacarpal (little finger) on his left hand last May 20 when he was hit by a pitch and wasn't activated until Aug. 11.

He seemed energized by his selection and perhaps even by the criticism that was directed at Manuel's decision.

He hit .373 (31-for-83) with 13 RBIs since June 5. In the last five games before the break, all multi-hit games, he was 13-for-24 (.542), including 9-for-14 (.643) with a home run in the last three games against the Mets. He actually led the Braves in scoring position (.352), even though his role limited him to 193 at-bats.

JIMENEZ AND JOHNSON GAVE NL EARLY BOOST

ROCKIES righthander **Ubaldo Jimenez** was 15-1 at the break, but a strong case actually could have been made for Marlins righty **Josh Johnson** to start the All-Star Game. Johnson, who entered the game after Jimenez, had a major-league best 1.70 ERA that was a full half-run lower than Jimenez's, and he had more strikeouts and fewer walks in a similar number of innings with a 9-3 record. Both worked two shutout innings in Anaheim.

Cardinals first baseman **Albert Pujols** is willing to talk about a contract extension in the off-season, but his agent, **Dan Lozano**, says that he is not 100 percent sure that such a deal would get done. The issue remains the same: The Cardinals will have difficulty keeping Pujols beyond 2011 if they are unwilling to make him the highest-paid player in the game.

Reds lefthander **Travis Wood** does not bear a physical resemblance to **Cliff Lee** — Wood is 5-foot-11, 163-pounds, while Lee is 6-foot-3, 190. But it is not an accident that Wood resembles Lee with his easy demeanor on the mound. "He lives two minutes from him (in Arkansas), does charity work with him, and began working out with Cliff religiously after Cliff's Cy Young year in 2008," said agent **Derek Braunecker**, who represents both pitchers.

The Marlins made infielder **Jorge Cantu** and outfielder **Cody Ross** available, but held off initially on second baseman **Dan Uggla** and righthander **Ricky Nolasco**. Cantu, a potential free agent, would be ideal for the Rockies, an even better fit than Uggla, who likely will earn \$10 million in arbitration next season. The Rockies wanted a right-handed, run-producing corner bat, and were unsettled at first without the injured **Todd Helton**.

Give Tigers first baseman **Miguel Cabrera** credit for committing himself to alcohol rehabilitation last off-season. "He tackled the problem," said Tigers general manager **David Dombrowski**. "He continues to tackle the problem. And in tackling the problem he is much more at ease with himself, a much happier person."

One scout predicts that Giants rookie catcher **Buster Posey** will be an All-Star within two years, saying, "He reminds me of Ryan Braun when Braun first came up." As for Posey's catching, the scout notes that Posey has a strong arm and simply needs to refine his receiving skills. "The bat's going to play," the scout said.

Rangers GM **Jon Daniels** says of outfielder **Josh Hamilton**, "You cannot believe what that man eats." Actually, what Hamilton drinks is even more astonishing — he says that he takes in 6,000 calories a day in protein shakes alone. "He always has a Styrofoam cup in his hand with some kind of shake in it," said Rangers second baseman **Ian Kinsler**.

The Dodgers, looking for bullpen help, were pondering an intriguing internal option: Righthander **Kenley Jansen**, a native of Curacao who was the starting catcher for the Netherlands in the 2009 WBC. The Dodgers converted Jansen to a reliever last season, and he was a combined 5-1 with a 1.71 ERA, 71 strikeouts and 21 walks at Class A and Double A this season.

- KEN ROSENTHAL IS A SENIOR WRITER FOR FOXSPORTS.COM



Cox was only 36 years old in 1978 when he began his managerial career in Atlanta with a team destined to finish last in the NL West with a 69-93 record (.426).

TEAM BUILDER

First Managerial Stint Lasted Only Four Seasons, But Cox's Progress Showed A Year Later

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

SEVERAL WEEKS after the Yankees defeated the Los Angeles Dodgers in six games to win the 1977 World Series, then Yankees first base coach Bobby Cox received the call he'd been waiting for. It was Atlanta Braves general manager, Bill Lucas, asking if he'd be interested in managing the team.

"I heard some rumors," said Cox. "A few clubs had called, but (Lucas) was the first one to interview me."

Cox got on a plane and flew South.

"Bill and I talked, and I met Ted Turner the next day," Cox recalled. "They made their offer, and I took it. I signed right then."

So began a relationship between Cox and the Braves that eventually spanned three decades, taking him from the field to the front office, and finally back to the field again. Cox saw his share of painfully bad teams in those early years, but still kept a positive attitude.

"You don't care what the record is when you get a chance to manage, especially your first chance," he said. "The challenge is what you're there for. We didn't win that year, but it was fun."

No, the 1978 Braves didn't win much, finishing with a 69-93 record, but they contributed to baseball's highlight reel nonetheless to include a rookie hitting a home run in his major league debut, a triple play, and on July 31, veteran reliever Gene Garber

brought Pete Rose's NL-record 44-game hitting streak to an end.

But before Cox's first season began to unfold, he had to assemble a coaching staff.

Chris Cannizzaro had been with the Braves organization since 1976 and remained, serving as bench coach for Cox in 1978. Other coaches brought in were Tommy Burgess, third base coach, Cloyd Boyer as pitching coach, and Pete Ward, who served as Cox's first base coach.

Ward remembers getting Cox's call at his home in Portland, Oregon.

"I had heard on the radio that Cox had gotten the job, and soon after, Bobby called," said Ward. "We chatted, I congratulated him on getting the job, and then he said, 'The reason I'm calling is, would you be interested in a coaching position?' and I said, 'Uh, yes.' And that was it."

Ward, runnerup for AL Rookie of the Year in 1963, played most of his career with the White Sox but was traded to the Yankees in 1970, just as Cox was ending his career at Triple-A Syracuse. He followed Cox through the Yankees minor league managing ranks. Ward saw, first hand, Cox's transition from playing to managing, first in the minors and then in the big leagues.

"He played for (Yankees manager) Ralph Houk and it showed,"

SEVENTH IN A SERIES

#6 THE FINAL SEASON

said Ward, who also lived in Cox's home for part of the season. "He did all he could with what he had. He put his players up, treated them well, and never tore them down. He's the same type of manager Houk was. Managers are really important to players. We look back on our careers, and sometimes you can name a manager you love. Bobby falls into that category."

Phil Niekro was a key player on Cox's first team in '78.

"Having a pitcher like Knucksie was a lot to have," said Cox. "He'd already had success before I came in. He knew how to win. Watching Knucksie pitch every game made everything worth it."

And Niekro had immediate respect for his new manager.

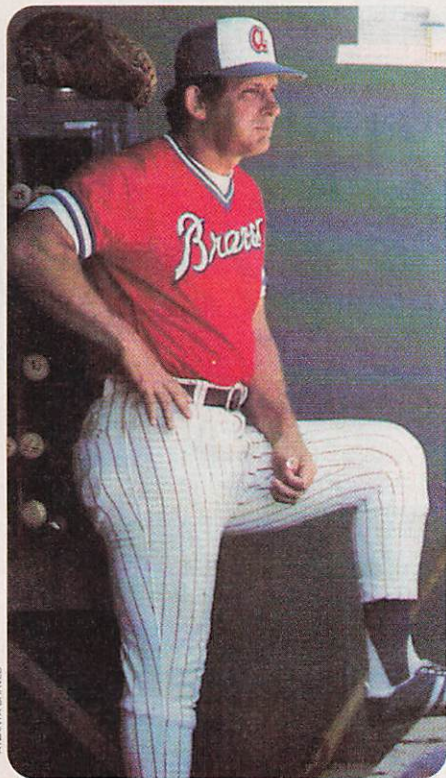
"He expected you to come to the ballpark ready to play," said Niekro. "He had been part of a winning organization and knew what it was supposed to be like."

"I didn't come in with a different agenda or way of doing things," recalled Cox. "I had managed in the minors. I just handled it the way I did there. I just wanted everyone to work hard and give 100 percent every day. When I was in the minors, my goal was to make all my players into major leaguers,



Braves Hall of Fame executive Bill Lucas (L) and then-owner Ted Turner made the decision to hire Cox (R) after his 1977 stint as first base coach for the World Champion Yankees.

ATLANTA BRAVES



ATLANTA BRAVES

Cox played a major role in developing young players such as Dale Murphy, Bob Horner, Glenn Hubbard and Bruce Benedict that were staples of the organization for several years.

but in the major leagues, the goal was to win and make them better. There's always a level of work or instruction."

Three young rookies - third baseman Bob Horner, second baseman Glenn Hubbard, and catcher Bruce Benedict - made their debuts in 1978. Horner had just finished slugging his way through the College World Series for Arizona State when he was selected by the Braves in the first round of the draft.

"I talked to Ted Turner and Bill Lucas and worked out a deal," said Horner. "Three or four days later, I was in the big leagues."

Horner described himself as a "20-year-old kid with a lot to learn."

The Braves were on the road when Horner got to Atlanta, so he didn't meet Cox until the night before his debut, June 16, when he memorably hit a home run in his third at-bat.

"Bobby was very good to me," he said. "He helped me when he could and told me the truth. He put me in a position to go out and perform. He taught me how to dress, where to go, and when to get there. We were expected to dress nicely on the road and to look like ballplayers. You know, this was 1978. But there weren't any warmup suits or blue jeans on the road, none of that. I expect if a guy's hair was too long, Bobby wouldn't hesitate to walk up to him and say, 'Hey

pal...' I would have expected it out of him."

Horner went on to have an outstanding rookie season, hitting .266 with 23 homers and 63 RBIs in just 89 games (323 at-bats). He earned National League Rookie of the Year honors, the same season he also earned College Player of the Year.

Hubbard was a July callup in 1978.

"I was doing well [at Richmond], so I was fortunate that they noticed," Hubbard said. "Bobby put me at second and switched Jerry Royster to shortstop. I just remember getting there and seeing my name in the lineup. I was overjoyed to go out on that field with a Braves jersey on."

In his second start, July 15 against the Philadelphia Phillies, Hubbard was part of a triple play of some distinction. In the top of the seventh inning Garber walked Greg Luzinski, then walked Richie Hebner. Jose Cardenal followed by hitting a liner to Horner at third, who fired the ball to Hubbard, also 20 years old, at second, who threw to 22-year-old Dale Murphy at first.

"We were the youngest triple play in major league history," said Hubbard. "It was just my second game! Bobby was... you know, pats on the back and stuff, but not over the top. Same way he is now."

Hubbard also remembers a fiery manager.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

FREE CAPS!

ChopTalk wants everyone to tip their caps to Bobby Cox.

To help make that happen, we're now offering
FREE replica Atlanta Braves caps to anyone that
subscribes, renews, or purchases a gift subscription.

* Limited offer. Good while supply lasts. Replica cap. Adjustable - one size fits most.

MAIL IT IN!

SEND NAME, ADDRESS AND
CHECK OR CARD INFO TO:

CHOPTALK

P.O. BOX 81247
CONYERS, GA
30013-9247

PHONE IT IN! | 1-877-655-2467

ORDER ONLINE! | BRAVES.COM/CHOPTALK

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

CHOPTALK, P.O. BOX 81247, CONYERS, GA 30013-9247

SEND TO:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

APT. NO. _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

BILL TO:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

APT. NO. _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

☐ Free Cap will be sent to Billing address unless this box is checked.

\$37.95

1 year (12 issues)

\$67.95

2 years (24 issues)

PLEASE CHECK IF THIS
IS A RENEWAL.

☐ CHECK ENCLOSED

☐ BILL MY CREDIT CARD

☐ MC ☐ VISA ☐ AMEX ☐ DISCOVER

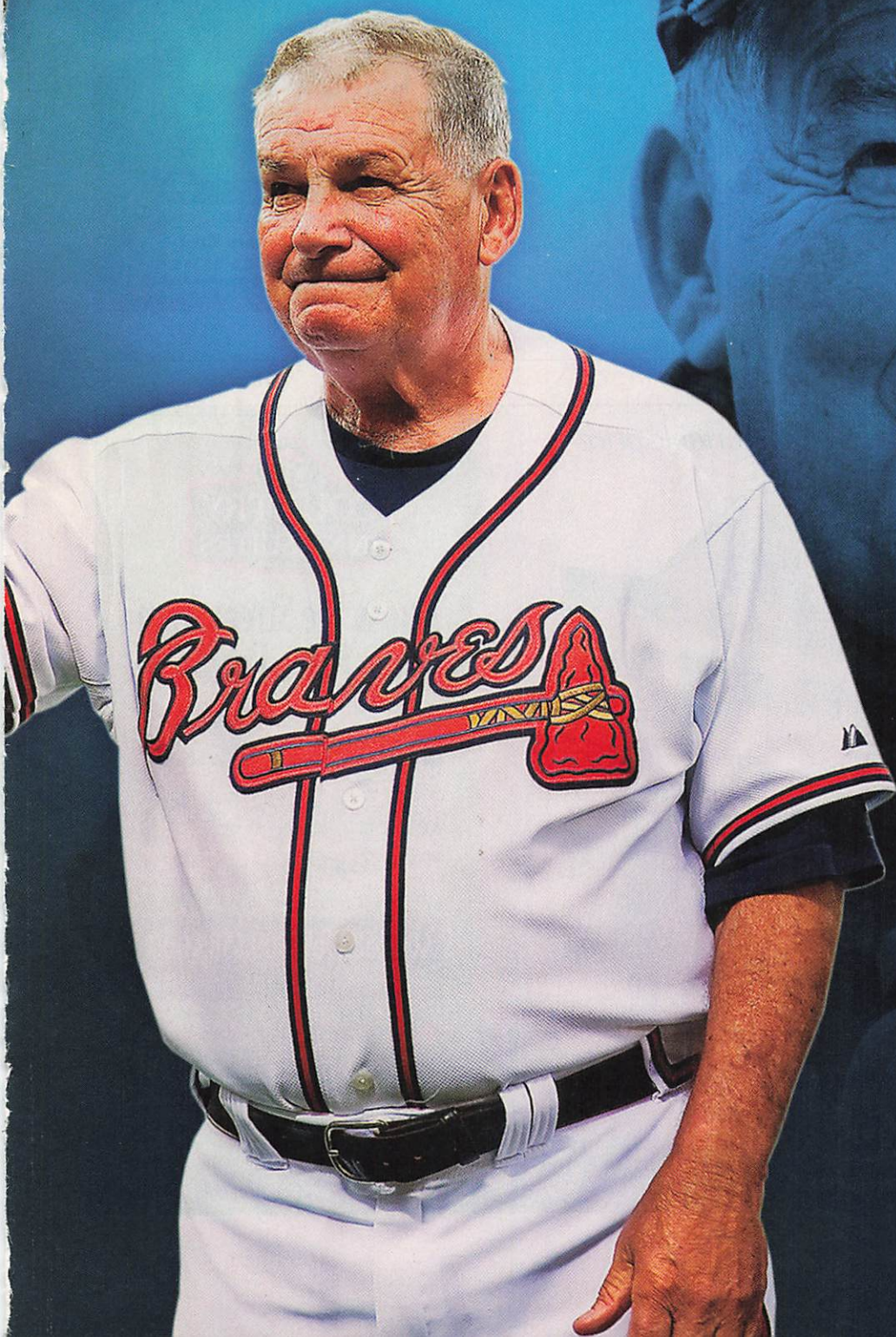
CC # _____

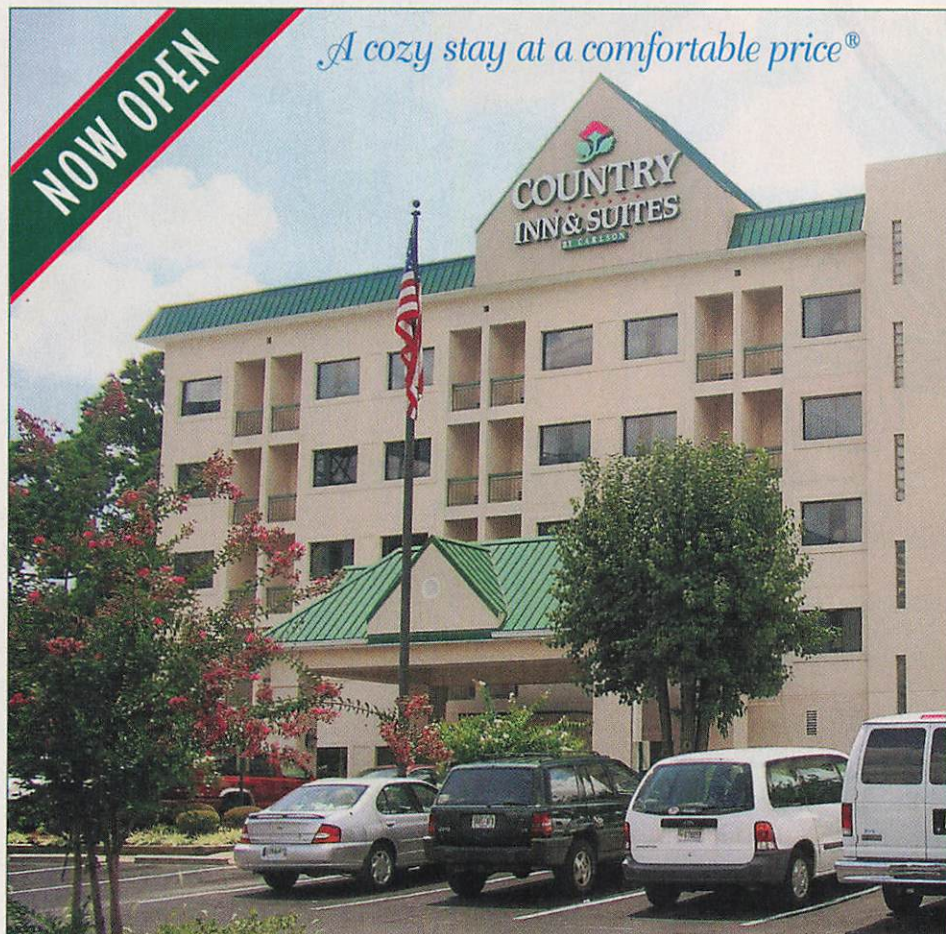
EXP. _____

Clip, Photocopy or Hand Print This Coupon

ChopTalk

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE
OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES





**Across the Street from
Home Plate Entrance!**



759 Pollard Boulevard, Atlanta, Ga. 30315

404.658.1961 800.456.4000
www.countryinns.com

- ❖ Complimentary High-Speed-Wireless Internet Access
- ❖ Complimentary Deluxe Breakfast Bar
- ❖ Parking Included with Each Room
- ❖ Sparkling Clean New Rooms/Suites
- ❖ Bullpen Bar & Grill Next Door

Comfort INN

City Center
at Turner Field



- 30 FEET FROM THE S.W. GATE!
- FREE GUEST PARKING
- COMPLIMENTARY, DELUXE CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST BAR



If location is everything,
we have everything you need on game day

404.658.1610

FOR GROUP RATES
CALL OUR SALES DEPT.
AT 404.658.1610

COMFORT INN CITY CENTER AT TURNER FIELD 795 POLLARD BLVD. ATLANTA, GA. 30315

QUALITY

HOTEL DOWNTOWN ATLANTA
89 Luckie Street Atlanta, Ga. 30303

*Special Game Day
Rates Starting At* **\$59** AND UP

- Complimentary Continental Breakfast Bar
- Convenient to Braves MARTA Shuttle at Five Points Station
- 5 Minute Drive to Turner Field

404.524.7991

www.choicehotels.com



*We invite you to enjoy all Atlanta
has to offer-right outside our door!*



FOR GROUP RATES CALL OUR SALES DEPARTMENT AT 678.420.6441

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

"He was like a raging bull back then," said Hubbard. "He had a lot of [passion] for the game. That hasn't changed. If you listen to the broadcast, you'll hear him yelling from the first pitch of the game."

"The greatest compliment a manager can give a player is to put him in the starting lineup every day," said Benedict. "You don't need a guy to pump you up. You don't need some special friendship. You want to know that your manager trusts you enough to put you in a lineup and help you win a ballgame."

Benedict made his debut against the Cardinals on his 23rd birthday, August 18, 1978.

"I had just gotten to Atlanta from Richmond, and he said to me, 'Be ready to play, every day. You're not here to sit,'" said Benedict. "And he was right."

With many of the young players from 1978 along with seasoned veterans, Cox began developing a nucleus of players. They came in sixth place in the NL West in 1978 and 1979 (66-94), climbing to fourth in 1980 (81-80). The players strike in 1981 played havoc with the standings. The Braves were in fourth place for the first half of the season and fifth place for the second half, finishing 50-56. Turner opted to fire Cox at the end of the season with his overall record 266-323 (.452).

"We were so close," said Cox. "We all knew it."

Benedict said, "We could sense we were on to something. Many of us had played together in the minor leagues and had been successful. Bobby was the right manager for us at that time. When he was fired, at some level you felt as if you'd let him down. I felt bad for him and, not knowing the industry, I didn't really know what the organization was thinking. We were a team that was coming on."

The 1982 Braves did just that. With their new manager Joe Torre, the team won their first 13 games and ended up winning the NL West. But there was no doubt who built that team. Cox's fingerprints were all over the construction and character of the '82 Braves. "No disrespect to Joe at all," said Murphy, "but Bobby Cox built that team."

After his firing, Cox took a break from the National League, heading north of the border to manager the Toronto Blue Jays. There was much more team building in his future.

NEXT MONTH: PART EIGHT.

Cox's Influence Is Widespread Throughout Managerial Ranks



White Sox manager Ozzie Guillen (L), who played for the Braves in 1998-99, commissioned this humidor that was designed and constructed by former White Sox player Ron Kittle, and then presented it to Cox June 22 in Chicago.

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

IN MID-MAY, Fredi Gonzalez, former manager of the Florida Marlins, encountered a "What would Bobby do?" moment in handling a sticky situation with one of his premier players. Shortstop Hanley Ramirez misplayed a ball and then booted it another 100 or so feet into left field. Two runs scored as Ramirez slowly loped after the ball and threw it back it.

In the dugout at the end of the inning, Gonzalez expressed his displeasure with Ramirez, taking him out of the game and benching him the next day until the shortstop apologized to teammates.

It was an incident reminiscent of a game in 1998 when then Braves centerfielder Andruw Jones failed to hustle to make a catch. Bobby Cox didn't even wait until the end of the inning to discipline Jones, yanking him on the spot and sitting him on the bench to watch the rest of the game.

That move made an impression on Jones and on one of his teammates, Ozzie Guillen, now manager of the Chicago White Sox.

"I remember that game. I was playing

shortstop," said Guillen. "I thought, 'Oh my God! If I was the manager, I wouldn't do that.' When Andruw went by me, he was very upset. I said, 'Hey, he's doing that for a reason.' That's all I told him."

Later, Guillen spoke to Jones, reinforcing Cox's actions.

"I told him, he didn't do that just to embarrass you," said Guillen. "I told him Cox will make you be a helluva ballplayer, and the way you played today, you're not going to be."

"It takes a lot of guts for a manager to do that. What I learned from Bobby is that if you take someone out of a game, it should make you better. And it did. I think Andruw Jones is a good player because of Bobby Cox."

In almost any profession, the mark of a good leader is the ability to cultivate leadership in others. To that end, Cox ranks high as an excellent leader. To date, nine of Cox's former coaches or players have gone on to manage in the major leagues, including three who are currently managing major league teams.

STORIES OF BOBBY

Cito Gaston was a player for Cox in Atlanta in 1978 and a coach under him in Toronto from 1982-85. He currently manages the Toronto Blue Jays.

Guillen played two seasons for Cox, 1998 and 1999, later becoming White Sox manager in 2005.

Ned Yost coached third base for the Braves from 1991-2002 before his first managerial stint with the Milwaukee Brewers from 2003-08. He was fired by the Brewers in 2008 and became a special assistant in baseball operations for the Kansas City Royals in January 2010. When Royals manager Trey Hillman was fired on May 13, Yost was named as his replacement.

Gonzalez, mentioned as a strong possibility to manage the Braves next year, was Cox's third base coach from 2003-06 and became manager of the Marlins in 2007 until he was fired this June 23.

Other former major league managers who played for, or coached with, Cox include current Colorado Rockies hitting coach Don Baylor, who coached for Cox in 2002, then managed the Cubs in 2000-2002, and Grady Little, a Braves minor league manager (1986-95), who later managed the Boston Red Sox in 2002-03 and the Dodgers in 2006-07.

Broadcaster Buck Martinez played for Cox in Toronto from 1982-85 and later managed the Blue Jays in 2001-02. Jerry Royster played for Cox in his first stint as Braves manager, from 1978-81. Royster later managed the Brewers in 2002 and now manages in Korea.

Jimmy Williams coached in Toronto with Cox from 1982-85 and rejoined Cox with the Braves from 1990-96. Williams managed in Toronto in 1986, when Cox left to return to the Braves as general manager, until 1989. He managed the Red Sox from 1997-2001 and the Houston Astros from 2002-04.

It's generally accepted that Guillen is one of baseball's fieriest and most colorful managers, temperamentally opposite of Cox. But that's just the surface. Guillen is considered a knowledgeable baseball man, and he attributes much of that reputation to conversations with Cox during his playing days with the Braves.

"It's not easy when you're a player to go and ask the manager questions," said Guillen. "Some people think you're second-guessing them. But I loved baseball, and there was no one better than Bobby to talk to about baseball. He never minded if I asked questions about the game."

Guillen said that whether on the charter flight or sitting in the dugout, Cox was

always available to talk.

"I told him I wanted to manage or coach someday, and he told me a lot about the game, about what I needed to do to prepare," said Guillen. "He didn't hide anything. He tells you straight. A lot of people have ideas about how to run a team, and Bobby did, too, but he knows you have your own ideas, too. Bobby let the players alone. That's the way he worked."

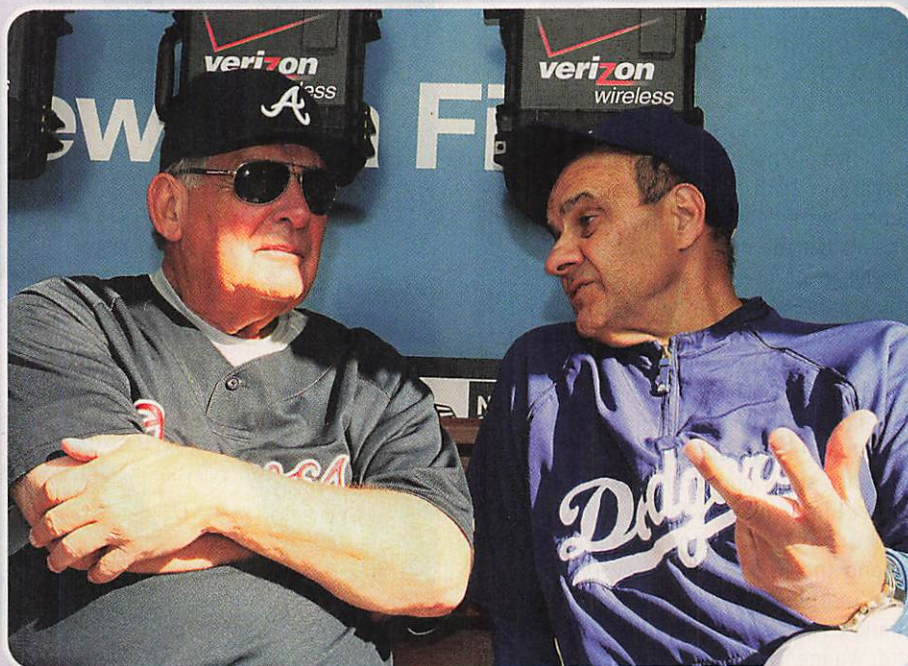
"I'm different from him. I go out with the players, sit with them on the plane. That's just me. But hopefully, someday they'll see me and say, 'There's Mr. Guillen,' like players do with Bobby. I hope I get that same

"I think he was 1-for-22, or something like that," said Gonzalez. "We were in Texas, and the press was talking to Bobby, asking if he was going to play Johnson. I was drinking some water in the dugout, listening. Bobby said, 'He's taking good swings. He reminds me of [Hall of Famer] Stan Musial.' I almost choked on the water I was drinking!"

"Coincidence or not, Kelly started hitting and was named Player of the Week."

Gonzalez said Cox has a unique ability to see the game in a different way than others see it.

"He's got great confidence and feel for the game," he said. "He reads the game



Joe Torre (R), visiting Cox in the Braves' dugout at Dodger Stadium June 4, benefited from Cox's first rebuilding job when he won the 1982 NL West title the season after he replaced Cox.

level of respect."

By contrast, Gonzalez's managerial style is similar to that of his mentor, Cox. Neither one of them would criticize a player in the press, preferring to keep those conversations private.

"I saw him take guys in his office and call them everything but a ballplayer," said Gonzalez. "But when that door opens, it's over. The biggest thing that separates Bobby from other managers is the patience and confidence he shows in his players."

Asked whether he recalled a particular demonstration of patience and confidence, Gonzalez replied, "I have the perfect story."

Gonzalez's story took place when former Braves second baseman Kelly Johnson was mired in a horrible slump in early June 2005.

like a conductor reads the musical score, apparently different from everyone else. He can really sniff out a win and isn't afraid to empty the bench. He'll say, 'We're trying to win a ballgame. We can't go halfway.'"

The respect Gonzalez has for Cox extends off the field, as well. The two men live within a few miles of each other in suburban Atlanta and are early morning, off-season regulars at a local doughnut shop, along with Yost and Braves pitching coach Roger McDowell.

"I'm sure we'll keep having coffee together in the mornings, even after he's retired," said Gonzalez. "I'll tell you this much for sure - I'm not looking forward to the end of the season. It's going to be pretty emotional."

WAGNER'S 400-SAVES FORMULA

BY STEVE FALL

ON JUNE 25, Billy Wagner became just the fifth pitcher - and second lefty - to reach 400 career saves. How does the Braves closer rank among the greatest of his era?

Wagner, who had 401 saves through July 1, joined some legendary relievers in the elite 400-save club: Trevor Hoffman (596), Mariano Rivera (543), Lee Smith (478), and lefty John Franco (424). They aren't likely to have new company any time soon. Among active pitchers, other than Hoffman, Rivera and Wagner, only Francisco Cordero (271) and Francisco Rodriguez (261) have surpassed the 250-save mark.

All five pitchers in this group began their careers in 1980 or later. This is no coincidence, since most managers began using closers for one inning at a time during the 1980s. Prior to this, closers would enter many games in the seventh or eighth, which made it much tougher to accumulate high save totals. Smith closed multiple-inning saves early in his career, but later benefited from the one-inning trend.

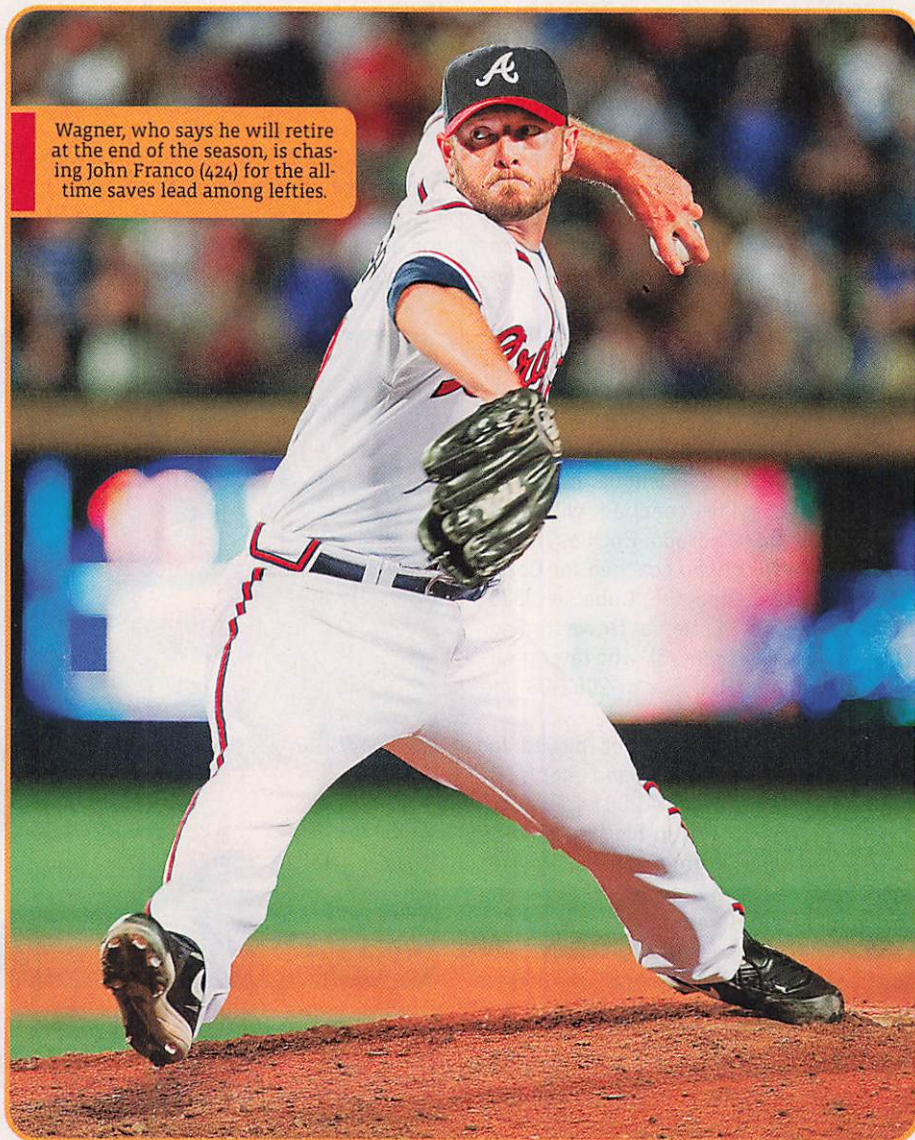
Within this group, Wagner's qualitative statistics stack up extremely well. His 2.34 career ERA trails only Rivera (2.22). Wagner is the most dominant strikeout pitcher among the five. He leads everybody by a wide margin with 11.9 strikeouts per nine innings. Hoffman (9.4) ranks a distant second. Wagner owns the best batting average allowed figure by far (.188). Rivera is next at .209. Wagner also has converted 86.2 percent of his 465 save opportunities. This trailed Rivera (89.6) and Hoffman (88.7).

Putting it all together, Rivera stands atop the group, especially considering his stellar post-season performance. Compared to Hoffman, Wagner has superior qualitative statistics, but Hoffman has 195 more saves. Among the 400-save club, Wagner certainly ranks no lower than third overall.

Many great relievers fell short of 400 saves, but turned in outstanding careers. A total of 25 pitchers have registered at least 250 saves since 1985. Comparing Wagner to this expanded group provides additional proof of his excellence.

Wagner's 2.34 ERA again trails only Rivera's 2.22. Francisco Rodriguez placed third with a 2.49 ERA. Wagner still leads in strikeouts per nine innings. His 11.9 tops Rodriguez (11.4). Troy Percival edges him in

Wagner, who says he will retire at the end of the season, is chasing John Franco (424) for the all-time saves lead among lefties.



batting average allowed, but Wagner's .188 tops everybody else. Taking everything into account, nobody in the expanded group surpassed Wagner except Rivera and Hoffman.

Wagner's 2010 performance also had him headed for one of the best seasons ever by a 38-year-old closer. He was on track to record 30 saves, a level reached by just six pitchers his age: Hoffman (46), Jose Mesa (43), Rivera (39), Todd Jones (37), Dennis Eckersley (36) and Tom Gordon (34). Wagner also had an incredible 1.15 ERA. While he's unlikely to sustain that, the Braves lefty has a chance to best Rivera (1.40) for the lowest ERA by a pitcher in his age-38 season (minimum: 50 innings).

Through mid-season, Wagner stood alone when it came to strikeout rate, even when including starters. Randy Johnson struck out the most batters per nine innings in his age-38 season (11.6). Wagner had an amazing 14.1 through the season's first three months.



The two greatest third basemen in Braves history started their careers over four decades apart in different cities. At this stage of his career, Chipper Jones has put up remarkably similar statistics to Hall of Famer Eddie Mathews.

Their numbers look even closer if only

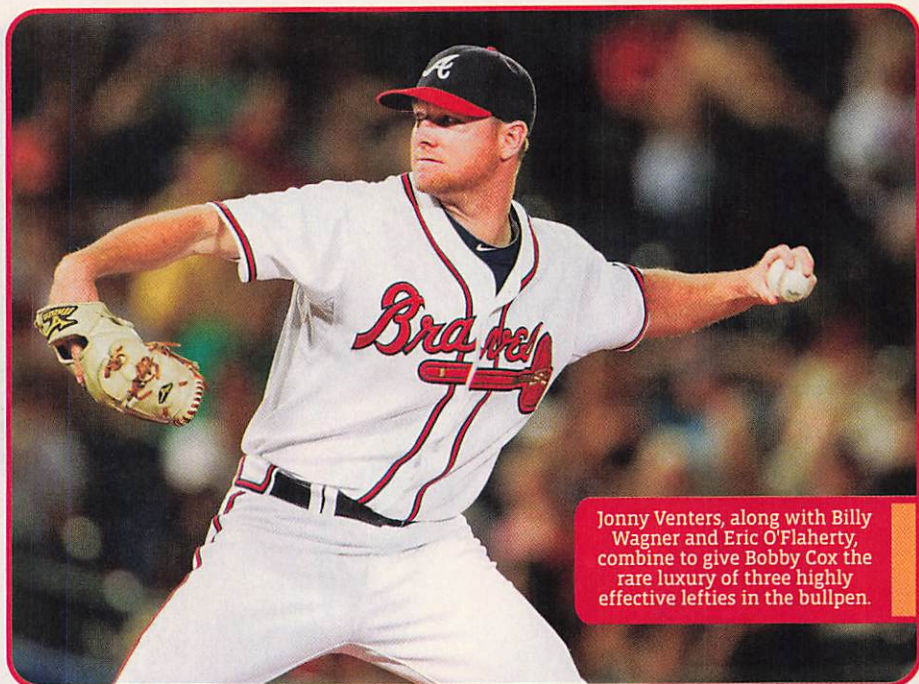
Mathews' statistics in a Braves uniform get included (1952-66). He spent all except his final two seasons with the franchise. Through July 1, Jones had 9,535 plate appearances compared to 9,533 for Mathews. Jones had 1,477 RBIs versus 1,388 for Mathews. Their runs scored totals were even closer: Jones had a 1,486-to-1,452 advantage.

Jones and Mathews shared another similarity: Both players walked about as often as they struck out. Jones had drawn 1,390 career walks and struck out 1,266 times. Mathews had 1,376 walks for the Braves franchise, just 14 fewer than Jones, and 1,387 strikeouts.

The players varied much more in the percentage categories. Jones had a significant edge in batting average (.306 to .273), as well as on-base percentage (.406 to .379), and slugging (.536 to .517).

The players' 162-game averages, as shown on Baseball-Reference.com, make the comparison even more fascinating. Jones had averaged 31 home runs, 107 runs batted in, 108 runs scored, 101 walks, and 92 strikeouts. Mathews had 36 homers per 162 games, with 102 RBIs, 106 runs scored, 101 walks, and 102 strikeouts.

While he has had problems staying healthy in recent years, Jones showed impressive durability through much of his career. In his first nine seasons, Jones never missed more than 10 games. Mathews played in at least 140 games 13 times during his first 14 years with the Braves (most of those seasons had 154-game schedules). No other major leaguer



Jonny Venters, along with Billy Wagner and Eric O'Flaherty, combine to give Bobby Cox the rare luxury of three highly effective lefties in the bullpen.

POLYA DANAY/ATLANTA BRAVES

matched Mathews' feat in that time frame (1952-65). Both third basemen began missing many more games in their early 30s.



Through July 1, the Braves were 28-9 at Turner Field. That .757 home winning percentage led the majors. The problem was that they also had an 18-24 road record (.429). That tied for just the 17th-best road mark among the 30 big league clubs.

Most teams play better at home than on the road, but not this much better. Atlanta

had a 328 percentage point difference between its home and road records. That also led every other team. The average difference was just 125 percentage points.

This marked a dramatic change from last year, when the Braves actually played better on the road than at Turner Field. They posted a 46-35 road record and went 40-41 at home.

From 1997 – the team's first season in Turner Field – through 2009, the Braves had an unusually small 53-point difference in their home and away records. They had a .598 winning percentage at home versus .545 on the road in that time frame.

At home this season, the Braves had averaged 5.14 runs per game and allowed 3.68. Surprisingly, considering their losing road record, they had still outscored the opposition in away games. Atlanta had scored 4.38 runs per game and allowed 4.24.

Trends like this usually become less extreme over the course of a full season. It will be interesting to see how the Braves' percentages change in the second half.



Billy Wagner isn't the only lefthander turning in a strong season in the Atlanta bullpen. He teams with Jonny Venters and Eric O'Flaherty to give Bobby Cox the rare luxury of three solid lefty relievers. The trio had combined for an incredible 1.58 ERA. They also had 17 saves, 14 holds, a 9-1 won-lost record, 10.5 strikeouts per nine innings, and a .189 batting average allowed.

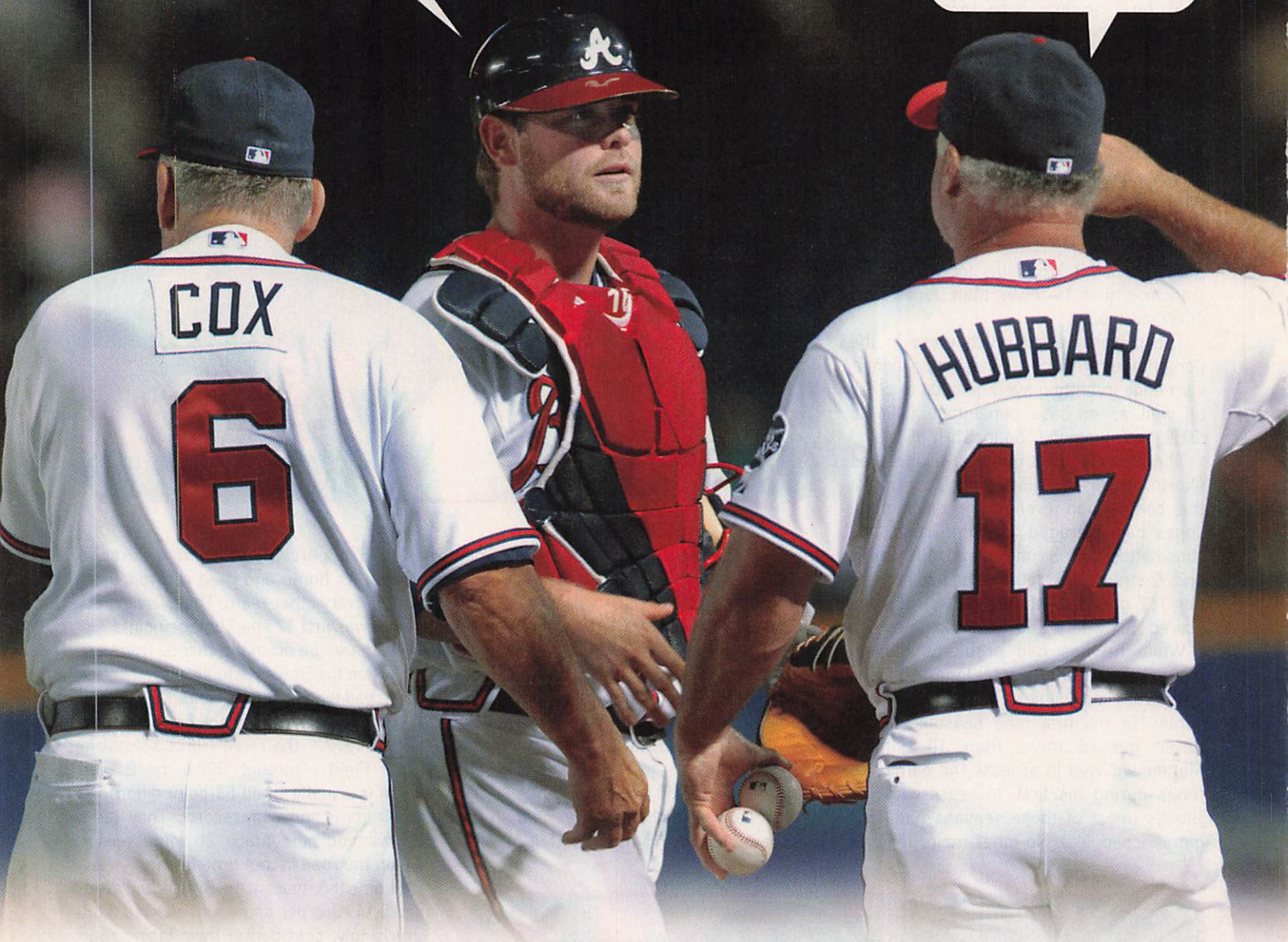


Statistically, Chipper Jones has much in common with Hall of Fame third baseman Eddie Mathews, who spent nearly all of his career with the Braves.

POLYA DANAY/ATLANTA BRAVES

How did you know he couldn't hit a slider?

braves.com



braves.com

TM

braves.com is where Braves fans go

**Get official gear, follow breaking news, buy tickets, watch live baseball on MLB.TV,
follow live action on Gameday, listen live on Gameday Audio
and stay connected with MLB.com Mobile Team and Video Alerts.**



Braves shop

MLB.TV

MLB.com

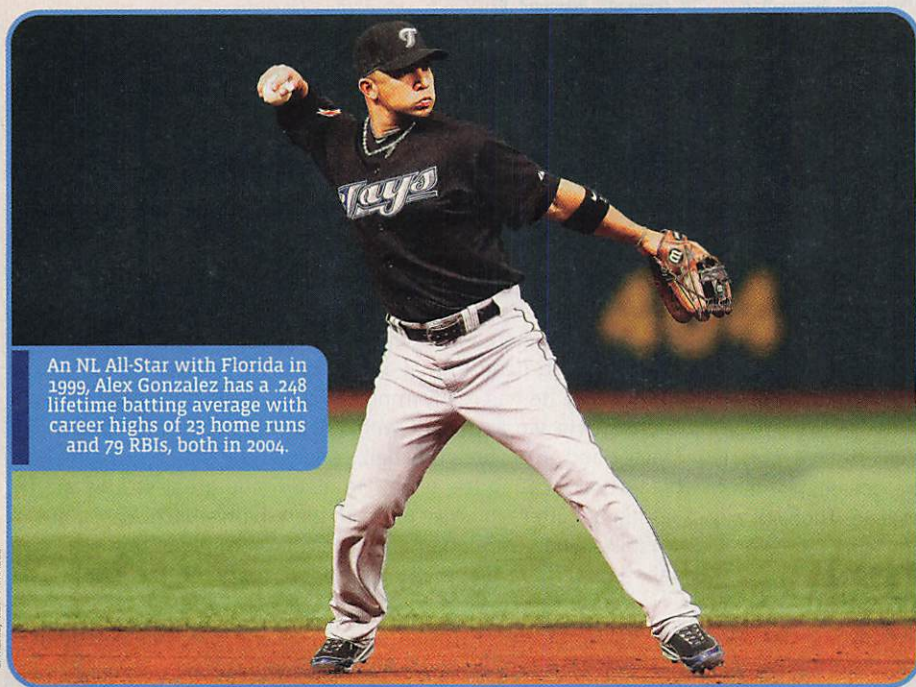
MLB.com/mobile

**GAMEDAY
AUDIO**



bravesbeisbol.com

© 2009 MLB Advanced Media, L.P. Major League Baseball trademarks and copyrights are used with permission of the applicable MLB entities. All rights reserved. Photo: Getty Images.



An NL All-Star with Florida in 1999, Alex Gonzalez has a .248 lifetime batting average with career highs of 23 home runs and 79 RBIs, both in 2004.

J. MERIC/GETTY IMAGES

SHORTSTOP SWITCH

Alex Gonzalez Brings New Look To Infield And Provides Veteran Presence For Playoff Run

BY MARK BOWMAN
OF MLB.COM

YUNEL ESCOBAR'S oft-maddening personality was acceptable when he was one of the most valuable members of the Braves last year. However, the offensive struggles he experienced this season made him expendable and much more of a clubhouse distraction.

On July 14, the Braves announced that they swapped shortstops with Toronto in a five-player deal that brings Alex Gonzalez to Atlanta and sent Escobar to the Blue Jays.

The last straw for an organization that patiently waited for the 27-year-old Escobar to mature seemed to be the lackadaisical throw he made July 9 in New York that pulled Troy Glaus off first base and put him at risk of a serious hand or wrist injury during the sixth inning of a 4-0 win over the Mets.

With Gonzalez, the Braves believe they get a defensively sound shortstop, who is enjoying one of the finest offensive seasons of his career. The 33-year-old veteran hit .259 with 17 homers (most among major league shortstops) in 85 games with the Blue Jays this year.

"We were looking at ways to improve our

ballclub," said GM Frank Wren. "Alex is a solid veteran and good defensive player who is having a very good offensive season. We believe he can help improve our offensive production."

In the deal, the Braves also parted ways with Jo-Jo Reyes, the once-promising 25-year-old lefthander who has spent most of

"Alex is a solid veteran and good defensive player who is having a very good offensive season. We believe he can help improve our offensive production."

- FRANK WREN

the past two years with Triple-A Gwinnett. To complete the five-player trade, the Jays also exchanged minor league shortstop Tyler Pastornicky and Tim Collins, a promising 20-year-old lefthander who has produced impressive numbers with Double-A New Hampshire this season.

When Escobar hit .299 with 14 homers and 76 RBIs last year, it appeared he might be realizing his potential to become one of the game's top shortstops. But while hitting .239 with no homers and 19 RBIs this sea-

son, he gave the Braves more reason to be maddened by his flamboyant approach, which occasionally led to mental mistakes and regularly bothered both teammates and opponents.

"He's a talented guy," Wren said. "But for our ballclub right now, we felt we needed to make some changes, and it just wasn't happening here."

As the Braves began looking for potential suitors, they quickly learned the Blue Jays had definite interest in Escobar. But before dealing the Cuban shortstop, Wren had to find a club that was able to provide a major league-ready shortstop who would offset the fact that Escobar could still be deemed a bargain when he becomes arbitration-eligible at the end of this season.

With Gonzalez's contract including a \$2.5 million club option for 2011, the Braves felt more comfortable about parting ways with Escobar, who, despite his struggles this year, could gain \$3 million via arbitration next season.

As the Braves look toward 2011, they envision Gonzalez serving as their shortstop. By the time the '12 season arrives, Edward Salcedo might be ready to begin playing in Atlanta. The 18-year-old Salcedo, who signed a \$1.6 million signing bonus in February, is currently with Class-A Rome.

Bobby Cox benched Escobar after he forgot how many outs there were and didn't tag up at third base during an April 24 loss to the Mets.

"I think they're very similar," Wren said when asked to compare the defensive skills of the two shortstops. "Alex isn't as flashy, but he's extremely talented."

Gonzalez has hit .248 with a .696 OPS in 1,314 career major league games. While these numbers certainly don't indicate that he could be a difference-maker in Atlanta,

he appears to be in the midst of one of his occasional power surges.

After hitting 14 homers in his first full season with the Marlins in 1999, Gonzalez totaled just 18 over the next three seasons. Then he combined for 41 in 2003 and '04. This year marks only the second time since then that he has hit more than nine homers in a season.

"I was talking to [Cox], and he said he's always viewed him as a dangerous hitter," Wren said.



JONES, MINOR, LOPEZ IMPRESSING BY MAKING MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS

NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT in the minor leagues than for a player to make progress in his overall development. At times, the steps are obvious, resulting in promotions to the next level. On other occasions, however, the growth is more subtle, such as the refinement of a specific pitch or a better approach at the plate.

According to Kurt Kemp, the Braves' director of player development, three players have made the greatest strides during the first three-plus months of the season. Those players are shortstop Mycal Jones and pitchers Mike Minor and Robinson Lopez.

Drafted in the fourth round out of Miami Dade Community College in 2009, Jones impressed scouts in his first taste of pro ball by leading the Appalachian League with 50 runs and six triples last year. He was promoted to Rome to open this season and struggled early by hitting .125 in April. But he hit .353 over his next 34 games to earn a bump up to Myrtle Beach.

Jones continued to perform well against Carolina League competition by beginning his stint at advanced Class A with a 10-game hitting streak, five of those being multi-hit efforts. He highlighted his hot start with a walk-off home run that gave the Pelicans their first extra-inning victory of the season, on June 15 over Potomac. Through his first 23 games at Myrtle Beach, Jones was hitting .333.

"Mycal has tremendous speed, and he has learned how to use that to his advantage," Kemp said. "He's improved his footwork at shortstop, which has made his defense better. His athleticism is undeniable, and he's worked hard to polish some rough areas."

The same situation holds true for another member of the 2009 draft class. The left-handed Minor was the seventh overall pick after a strong career at Vanderbilt and debuted in Rome last August after signing in mid-month.

He made the jump to Mississippi this spring after pitching in the Arizona Fall League and showed a little rust early against Southern League hitters. In 15 starts with the M-Braves, Minor, who pitched a scoreless inning for the U.S. team in the Futures Game July 11 at Anaheim, won only two of eight decisions but pitched much better than the record would indicate. He led the league with 109 strikeouts and limited batters to a .233 average prior to receiving a promotion to Gwinnett in late June.

Minor continued to pitch well in the International League. In his first Triple-A start, on July 1, he worked into the eighth inning and earned the win in the G-Braves' 4-2 victory over Toledo. He had a no-hitter into the fifth inning and wound up

allowing three hits, three walks and one run while striking out nine.

"Based on where Minor was drafted, most people wouldn't expect him to need to make a lot of progress," Kemp said. "The fact is, he has really improved a lot of the finer points of pitching. He worked hard with (Mississippi pitching coach) Marty Reed on his breaking ball, especially on the depth of the break and locating the pitch. He also made great strides in setting up hitters in order to make them hit his pitch."

While Minor and Jones had received promotions this season, Lopez's development has been more in the subtle



After a slow start at Rome, speedy shortstop Mycal Jones got his bat going and earned a promotion to advanced-A Myrtle Beach, where his impressive hitting continues.

aspects of pitching. After leading the Gulf Coast League with a 1.29 ERA last year, the righthander has made a steady adjustment to full-season play by going 3-5 with a 3.48 ERA. His first eight outings came from the bullpen before he moved to the rotation in mid-May. Regardless of his role, hitters are not making consistent contact against the 19-year-old Lopez, who allowed only 58 hits in his first 72 1/3 innings and limited opponents to a .217 batting average.

"This is a young man who has really made a lot of progress over the past year," said Kemp of the free agent signee from the Dominican Republic. "Fastball command and the consistency of his changeup are two areas he has really worked on. He's still making some adjustments, but he's really getting a feel for pitching at a very young age."

DOMINICAN SIGNEE

Atlanta made an immediate splash on the international market that began July 2 by signing right-handed pitcher Mauricio Cabrera from the Dominican Republic.

The 16-year-old Cabrera is 6-foot-2 and 180 pounds and is the younger brother of Alberto Cabrera, a 21-year-old pitcher at the Double-A level with the Cubs. His fastball hits the upper 80s, and his curveball shows promise. Cabrera's best pitch is an outstanding changeup with excellent late movement. Several teams wanted to sign Cabrera, with Boston believed to be Atlanta's primary competition.



FIRST BASEMAN/designated hitter **Barbaro Canizares** and lefty reliever **Mike Dunn** were selected to participate in the Triple-A All-Star Game. Canizares, who ranked second in the organization with a .316 batting average through July 6, received the honor for the third consecutive year. Dunn, acquired from the Yankees over the off-season in the Javier Vazquez trade, was 2-0 with six saves, a 1.11 ERA and 54 strikeouts in his first 40 2/3 innings. He did not allow a run for 17 2/3 innings from April 19-May 20, and owns the highest strikeouts-per-nine-innings ratio of any IL reliever (12.0). Dunn earned all-star recognition in 2009 in the Eastern League...

The Braves signed outfielder **Willy Taveras** after he was released by Philadelphia on June 29. The speed-oriented outfielder has been released three times this season, with the Nationals and A's cutting him prior to his signing with the Phillies. The 28-year-old is considered to be a solid centerfielder and basestealer who has been inconsistent with the bat, including a .208 batting average in 104 plate appearances at Triple-A Lehigh Valley this year. In 2008, he led the NL with 68 steals for Colorado...

The Braves also re-signed outfielder **Josh Anderson** as a minor league free agent and assigned him to Gwinnett. Anderson, who played 40 games with Atlanta in 2008, was with Triple-A Louisville and Nashville earlier this season before being released by the Cincinnati and Milwaukee organizations, respectively...

Todd Redmond, who pitched a no-hitter May 28, has regained his early-season form. He threw six scoreless innings on June 28, followed by a solid seven-inning performance on July 3 in which he won his eighth

game while giving up just two hits and two walks and striking out seven. Those two outings earned Redmond IL Pitcher of the Week honors for June 28-July 4...

Freddie Freeman reached base in 26 straight games before going 0-for-3 with an RBI on July 7. The first baseman hit safely in 24 of 25 games with two 12-game hitting streaks, from June 11-23 and June 25-July 6. After batting just .259 in April and May, Freeman hit .316 with five home runs and 24 RBIs over his next 32 games...

Ryne Reynoso tied his career-high with eight strikeouts and earned his second win of the season with five strong innings during a 7-3 win over Toledo on June 29. It was Reynoso's first victory in seven decisions as a starter at Triple-A this year. Control issues have plagued Reynoso, with the righthander giving up 22 walks in his first 51 innings...

Matt Young was named the IL Player of the Week for June 21-27 after tying for the league lead with a .556 batting average and a .600 on-base percentage. Young scored 10 runs during the stretch and posted multi-hit efforts in every game he started, including three consecutive three-hit outings. Young saw some activity at second base in June and July after playing strictly in the outfield earlier this year and in all but six games in 2009...

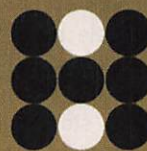
Jordan Schafer says he continues to feel stronger on a daily basis after a wrist injury suffered during the first half of 2009 sidelined the outfielder for nearly 10 months. Schafer had some difficulty regaining his timing at the plate during his rehab stints in May and shortly after joining the G-Braves in June...

Scott Proctor rejoined Gwinnett on June 22 after being promoted from Myrtle Beach. A veteran of five major league seasons, Proctor threw eight innings with the G-Braves early this season prior to being sent to extended spring training to improve his command while continuing to recover from Tommy John surgery. He worked 7 1/3 innings in the Carolina League and then a scoreless inning in his first outing back with Gwinnett...

Jeff Lyman was claimed off waivers by the Oakland A's after the reliever registered a 4.72 ERA in 21 games.



CATCHER Orlando Mercado, outfielder **Willie Cabrera**, designated hitter **Cody**



HYATT PLACE

Downtown

Walk or free shuttle to restaurants, shops, attractions - 3 mile radius



24 Hour Food Service! • Specialty Wine and Beer Bar • Freshly prepared Snacks and Salads in our Bakery Cafe • Starbucks!



A BRAND NEW all suite hotel that puts style, innovation and The Hyatt Touch within everyone's reach. 42" Flat Panel HDTV, Hyatt Grand Bed, Cozy Corner, Refrigerator and Coffee Maker. Personalized Service For Each Guest!



COMPLIMENTARY

- Continental Breakfast Buffet
- Wi-Fi throughout Hotel
- Daily in-suite Coffee
- Stay Fit Fitness Center
- Shuttle

404-577-1980 • Toll Free: 888-492-8847
or Book online at: www.hyattplace.com
Special Rate Code: BRAV
330 Peachtree Street, N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30308

Johnson and pitchers **Brandon Beachy** and **Mike Minor** were selected to participate in the Southern League All-Star Game. Mercado threw out 31 of the first 76 runners who attempted to steal against him, a remarkable 40.8 percent. He also had his best month at the plate in June by hitting .346...

Cabrera put together an impressive second half of the 2009 season and has continued to play well thus far this year. After a slow start in April, he batted .402 in May before hitting .295 in June. Cabrera also opened July on fire, posting 10 hits in his first 23 at-bats. Through July 6, he was tied for second in the SL with a .324 batting average and tied with teammate **Mauro Gomez** for the league lead with 26 doubles...

Beachy opened the season in the bullpen and went 1-1 with a 1.43 ERA and a save before shifting to the rotation on June 18. He responded to the challenge by recording a 0.72 ERA in his first four starts, including seven shutout innings against West Tenn on July 5 when he allowed four hits and no walks while striking out 11...

Johnson had 10 home runs through May 15 but did not hit another one prior to going on the disabled list July 1 with an injured right hamstring. He has struggled to make consistent contact. He led the Southern League with 97 strikeouts in his first 205 at-bats at the time of his injury...

Luis Bolivar returned to the lineup June 30 after spending nearly two months at Gwinnett. The Venezuelan shortstop, who batted .229 with the G-Braves, hit safely in his first six games back, going 9-for-17 with two home runs and three RBIs. His fielding also played a significant role in improving the M-Braves' defense...

Scott Diamond has pitched well lately after getting off to a poor start. The lefthander's ERA was 6.75 near the end of April. But in a five-start stretch from June 10-July 3, Diamond had a 2.20 ERA, even though his won-lost record during that stint was only 1-1...

Second baseman **Eric Duncan** hit safely in nine of his first 11 games after returning to the lineup June 26 following a two-week stint on the disabled list with a wrist injury... Righthander **Kyle Cofield** rejoined the pitching staff July 4 after spending two months on the DL...

Infielder **Randy Gress**, who hit .250 in 39 games with Mississippi, was released on June 26, the same day pitcher **Dustin Evans** retired.



MYRTLE BEACH ADVANCED A

ARODYS VIZCAINO was placed on the disabled list June 30 with a partially torn right elbow ligament. The Braves said the injury will not require surgery but will sideline him at least six weeks and possibly for the remainder of the season. Vizcaino, obtained from the Yankees in the Vasquez deal, has emerged as one of the premier pitching prospects in the minor leagues. His 83 innings this year are three shy of his career total...

TOP 10 PROSPECTS

- 1 **JULIO TEHERAN**
RHP, Age 19, Myrtle Beach
- 2 **RANDALL DELGADO**
RHP, 20, Myrtle Beach
- 3 **MIKE MINOR**
LHP, 22, Gwinnett
- 4 **ARODYS VIZCAINO**
RHP, 19, Myrtle Beach
- 5 **FREDDIE FREEMAN**
1B, 20, Gwinnett
- 6 **EDWARD SALCEDO**
SS, 19, Rome
- 7 **CRAIG KIMBREL**
RHP, 22, Gwinnett
- 8 **CHRISTIAN BETHANCOURT**
C, 18, Rome
- 9 **MYCAL JONES**
SS, 23, Myrtle Beach
- 10 **STEPHEN MAREK**
RHP, 26, Gwinnett

The loss of Vizcaino was offset by the return of **Brett Oberholtzer** and **Zeke Spruill** from the disabled list. Oberholtzer missed three weeks while battling a blister on his pitching hand. After starting his first eight games following a promotion from Rome in late April, Oberholtzer worked out of the bullpen in his first three outings back with the team and posted his second career save. Spruill, the Braves' second-round pick in 2008, suffered a broken hand after making only three appearances with the Pelicans in April...

After struggling in April before putting together a magnificent May (2-2, 2.86 ERA), **J.J. Hoover** had difficulty in June, posting a

6.17 ERA in five starts. He bounced back with six innings of excellent work on July 2 and won his fifth decision of the season by striking out seven without a walk and allowing only one earned run...

Pitcher **Julio Teheran** worked a scoreless inning for the World team in the All-Star Futures Game, held in Anaheim two days prior to the MLB All-Star Game. Teheran also was named the Carolina League Pitcher of the Week for June 14-20, and was one of 13 players named to Baseball America's mid-season all-star team...

Teheran and Hoover pitched in the Carolina League-California League All-Star Game at BB&T Coastal Field on June 22. Teheran worked a scoreless fourth and fifth innings and limited the Cal League to one hit while striking out two. Hoover worked two-thirds of an inning, giving up a walk but recording two strikeouts...

Pitcher **Chad Rodgers** was placed on the disabled list with a foot injury on June 24. Atlanta's third-round draft pick in 2006, Rodgers was a starter for most of his first three seasons before an injured left shoulder limited him to seven outings last year. The lefthander has come back strong in a relief role. He has allowed less than a hit per inning pitched...

Luis Avilan and **Yeliazar Castro** have been hard to hit, with Avilan limiting batters to a .138 average and Castro giving up a paltry .217 average. Castro had 51 strikeouts in his first 48 2/3 innings but had issued 35 walks...

Randall Delgado broke an eight-start winless streak when he worked six shutout innings to defeat Salem, 7-1, on July 6. The righthander had not posted a win since May 19 even though he allowed two runs or fewer in five of his next six starts and only 18 runs over his next eight outings. "He's an outstanding pitcher and an outstanding young man," said pitching coach **Kent Willis**. "He has a chance to contribute in a big way at higher levels..."

Matt Crim struggled after striking out a career-high nine batters against Kinston on June 11. Over his next four starts, through July 4, Crim surrendered 26 runs, 19 of which were earned. Lack of control, has been his biggest problem. Despite the mid-season bump in the road, Willis describes the unheralded Crim as a "dark horse" prospect...

Dan Nelson was promoted to Mississippi on July 5 after a strong showing with the Pelicans. Signed as a free agent in mid-May, Nelson batted .284 while leading the team with 24 RBIs in 40 games. He provided much of the Myrtle Beach offense in



BRANDON BEACHY

June by hitting .320 with three homers and 20 RBIs in 26 games...

Outfielder **Cory Harrilchak** was promoted to the Pelicans on June 24 after hitting .306 with 22 RBIs in 60 games at Rome. The outfielder went 9-for-20 with six RBIs in his first six games in July.



ROME

CLASS A

THE R-BRAVES received **Edward Salcedo** from the Dominican Summer League on July 2 after the heralded short-stop hit .297 with a home run and 11 RBIs in 74 at-bats. Salcedo signed with Atlanta in February and has impressed with his maturity and all-around ability in every phase of the game...

Todd Cunningham signed shortly after the Braves made him their second-round draft choice in June, but his professional debut was delayed for 10 days while Major League Baseball approved his contract that included a \$674,100 signing bonus. Cunningham, who played at Jacksonville State and won the batting title in the Cape Cod League last summer, debuted with the R-Braves on June 20 and had hits in his first two professional games, as well as in eight of his first 13 games...

First baseman **Riaan Spanjer-Furstenberg** was activated from the disabled list June 24 and proceeded to hit safely in his first eight games and 10 of his initial 11. Spanjer-Furstenberg had been sidelined since he suffered a broken hand in the fifth game of the season...

Brett DeVal, Atlanta's first pick in the 2008 draft, allowed two earned runs or fewer in seven of eight starts from May 24-June 30. After battling arm issues his first two seasons and missing the first month of this season while recovering from the removal of bone spurs in his elbow last fall, DeVal is making solid strides...

Chris Masters started the South Atlantic League All-Star Game for the Southern Division June 22 and allowed three hits and two earned runs while striking out a pair in an inning of work. Masters owned only one win through July 4 despite ranking among the league leaders with a 2.61 ERA and an opponents' batting average of .208...

Colby Rasmus pitched the sixth inning in the SAL All-Star Game and allowed a single while retiring the other three batters he faced. Rasmus opened the season in the bullpen before moving to the rotation in

GETTING THE CHANCE TO SIGN WAS A SHOCK

MAKING THE ALL-STAR TEAM caught me by surprise. I had been a middle reliever most of the year before I began starting late in the first half. Not many relievers make all-star teams, so I wasn't expecting anything. Still, it's a nice honor, and I'll gladly take it.

The recognition is especially nice since I wasn't drafted in college. I received no interest from scouts. I played mostly at third base and moonlighted as our closer.

I had a couple of bad outings early in my junior season, and then I dealt with some tendinitis, which happened to me every year while trying to balance playing third and pitching. I sat out a month from pitching prior to coming on at the end, so I never really did anything that warranted any attention from scouts.

Playing professional baseball had always been a dream and a goal of mine. I always felt like I had the ability, but for some reason I never really fulfilled that growing up. I never seemed to live up to what I thought I could do.

After my junior year, I decided to go to the Valley League in Virginia and concentrate on pitching that summer. I knew I wasn't going to make it to the next level as a hitter, and if I wanted to make my dream happen, it would be as a pitcher.

Once I arrived, I pitched all right and had a little success. Toward the end of my two months there, I started to figure things out a little bit.

(Scout) Gene Kearns of the Braves was cross-checking one night and saw me pitch. He came up to me and said he was interested in signing me. Not only was that a complete shock, but it was also a really exciting time for me.

That was pretty cool, going to Virginia to pitch summer ball and winding up pitching in Danville, Virginia, as a member of the Braves.

I felt I had a good first year in pro ball while pitching in Rome and Myrtle Beach and once in Mississippi. I was mostly a reliever, although I did start eight games. Regardless of whether I'm starting or relieving, I try to treat it all the same.

The one difference about starting that I really like is the routine aspect of the job. I can get my work in - running, long toss, side work - without having to worry about throwing in a game that night. As a starter, I try to pitch one inning at a time, which is my same approach as a reliever.

Having gone to a small school, I tended to put the Division-I players and all the other guys who were drafted on a pedestal. What I've come to realize in the two years since I signed is that I can play and compete at this level.

I think I doubted myself at first, but I've built my confidence, which comes from the great coaching staffs I've been able to work with. Plus, being able to work alongside and live with a great group of guys has really made the transition that much smoother.

I still have a lot to learn about pitching, especially the mental side - what to throw when and those types of things. Consistency is the main thing I'm trying to work on. I can make a good pitch, but I need to make it more consistently.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Brandon Beachy, 23, signed with the Braves as a non-drafted free agent out of Indiana Wesleyan University late in the summer of 2008. The righthander pitched at three levels last year, and opened this season at Double-A Mississippi, going 1-1 with a 1.43 ERA as a reliever. He moved to the rotation in mid-June and was 2-0, 0.72 after four starts and was selected to play in the Southern League All-Star Game.

“AS A STARTER, I TRY TO PITCH ONE INNING AT A TIME, WHICH IS MY SAME APPROACH AS A RELIEVER.”

FARM STATISTICS

THROUGH JULY 8



WINNETT

44-46

INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE TRIPLE A | COOLRAY FIELD (678) 277-0300

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Anderson, Josh (OF)	.189	19	53	8	10	1	0	0	1	2	11	3
Blanco, Gregor (OF)	.290	40	138	22	40	8	0	1	10	22	26	8
Bolivar, Luis (SS/2B)	.229	36	105	12	24	5	1	1	8	4	28	6
Boscan, J.C. (C)	.213	42	136	8	29	6	0	1	10	12	33	1
Canizares, Barbaro (1B)	.314	75	255	34	80	18	1	6	38	21	36	0
Cleven, Brent (OF)	.259	26	85	14	22	7	0	1	14	18	26	3
Freeman, Freddie (1B)	.284	77	282	36	80	22	2	10	49	25	47	2
Hernandez, Diory (SS)	.328	17	67	6	22	3	0	0	9	2	13	2
Hicks, Brandon (SS)	.211	49	161	14	34	7	0	2	12	18	36	8
Jones, Mitch (OF)	.265	73	268	37	71	23	1	15	37	13	70	1
Romero, Alex (OF)	.190	18	58	2	11	1	0	1	2	3	10	1
Sammons, Clint (C)	.166	49	157	15	26	6	0	2	14	16	34	2
Schafer, Jordan (OF)	.206	45	165	15	34	4	1	1	7	12	43	9
Thurston, Joe (INF)	.253	81	277	26	70	13	2	7	39	22	37	5
Timmons, Wes (3B)	.281	82	278	41	78	16	1	3	35	40	25	15
Young, Matt (OF/2B)	.303	81	294	47	89	22	3	2	20	29	33	17

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Dunn, Michael	2-0	1.08	32	0	7	41.2	26	7	5	20	55	.178
Gearrin, Cory	0-4	4.80	31	0	0	45.0	41	25	24	26	40	.252
Gomez, Mariano	3-2	2.89	28	0	1	43.2	38	17	14	17	27	.245
Gustafson, Tim	7-5	5.87	13	12	0	61.1	74	42	40	39	31	.308
Kimbrel, Craig	1-0	0.90	23	0	12	30.0	16	4	3	12	44	.155
Lyman, Jeff	0-0	4.72	21	0	0	34.1	32	24	18	23	26	.250
Marek, Stephen	1-0	1.13	24	0	4	24.0	23	6	3	9	26	.250
Martinez, Cristhian	2-1	3.90	16	0	0	32.1	28	15	14	6	30	.230
Minor, Mike	2-0	1.42	2	2	0	12.2	8	2	2	5	15	.178
Nunez, Vladimir	0-0	2.43	21	0	0	33.1	32	9	9	14	28	.256
Ortega, Jose	2-5	6.08	10	10	0	50.1	59	38	34	22	40	.295
Parr, James	2-5	5.16	9	9	0	45.1	54	26	26	17	28	.305
Redmond, Todd	8-8	4.25	18	18	0	103.2	101	54	49	24	87	.283
Resop, Chris	5-2	1.84	13	13	0	73.1	46	16	15	27	81	.183
Reyes, Jo-Jo	1-5	5.70	12	10	0	47.1	57	33	30	15	50	.295
Reynoso, Ryne	2-6	4.76	13	9	0	51.0	66	34	27	22	37	.319



MISSISSIPPI

40-45

SOUTHERN LEAGUE DOUBLE A | TRUSTMARK PARK (601) 664-7600

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Bolivar, Luis (SS)	.304	29	102	18	31	3	2	2	9	11	25	4
Cabrera, Willie (OF)	.326	72	270	35	88	27	0	2	42	22	28	10
Daniel, Michael (OF)	.241	35	108	11	26	4	1	2	13	9	19	7
Duncan, Eric (INF)	.296	72	267	29	79	13	3	3	38	17	62	4
Gomez, Mauro (1B)	.263	83	304	45	80	27	1	10	52	33	75	0
Gonzalez, Juan (INF)	.206	34	102	7	21	4	0	0	12	14	26	0
Gress, Randy (INF)	.250	39	96	13	24	4	0	2	6	11	26	0
Johnson, Cody (OF)	.210	62	205	26	43	6	0	10	31	20	97	8
Jones, Travis (2B)	.225	33	71	13	16	2	0	1	5	6	19	3
Linares, Donell (3B)	.248	74	290	40	72	14	1	9	32	10	32	2
Machado, Alejandro (INF)	.273	39	121	18	33	7	0	2	18	17	20	1
Mercado, Orlando (C)	.285	63	200	26	57	6	0	0	18	32	31	3
Richardson, Antwan (OF)	.315	36	127	31	40	3	1	0	8	20	19	12
Rodriguez, Concepcion (OF)	.221	58	163	16	36	7	2	0	23	19	35	2
Romero, Alex (OF)	.279	43	165	25	46	8	1	1	19	20	14	1
Sucre, Jesus (C)	.370	14	54	9	20	7	0	0	2	1	3	0

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Abreu, Juan	3-0	1.75	20	0	4	25.2	25	6	5	10	25	.255
Beachy, Brandon	3-1	1.15	24	4	1	62.2	45	12	8	19	78	.202
Broadway, Michael	1-1	2.93	21	0	1	27.2	24	9	9	10	33	.233
Butts, Brett	0-1	1.52	15	0	3	23.2	18	5	4	6	28	.212
Chapman, Jaye	1-2	5.11	18	0	0	24.2	33	17	14	12	30	.317
Cofield, Kyle	1-1	3.75	7	4	0	24.0	19	11	10	11	17	.209
Cordier, Erik	7-5	4.30	16	16	0	90.0	77	48	43	51	70	.237
Diamond, Scott	4-6	3.52	17	17	0	102.1	113	45	40	39	90	.288
Gustafson, Tim	3-0	1.72	4	2	0	15.2	11	6	3	7	12	.196
Hyde, Lee	2-3	2.82	28	0	8	38.1	41	19	12	11	34	.273
Minor, Mike	2-6	4.03	15	15	0	87.0	74	48	39	34	109	.233
Palica, Thomas	3-1	7.31	25	0	1	32.0	39	27	26	16	45	.298
Pruneda, Benino	0-2	5.73	8	0	0	11.0	7	7	7	9	13	.189
Reynoso, Ryne	0-1	5.68	6	0	0	12.2	11	8	8	4	14	.224
Sullivan, Richard	1-8	6.54	18	13	0	75.2	99	66	55	31	51	.327
Thompson, Jacob	5-7	6.29	18	14	0	78.2	103	64	55	27	49	.315



MYRTLE BEACH

32-53

CAROLINA LEAGUE ADVANCED A | BBST COASTAL FIELD (843) 918-6002

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Avila, Gerardo (1B)	.230	41	152	20	35	6	1	7	22	17	49	1
Barba, Ryan (SS)	.170	36	112	5	19	7	0	0	5	4	17	3
Campusano, Yoel (2B)	.192	36	130	14	25	5	0	3	11	19	27	2
Culver, Calvin (OF)	.217	39	138	8	30	3	0	0	10	7	22	0
Jones, Michael (1B)	.236	42	161	12	38	7	0	2	24	15	41	0
Jones, Mycal (SS)	.317	24	101	15	32	9	0	1	5	7	22	7
Jones, Travis (2B)	.231	40	147	24	34	8	0	6	22	21	37	3
Kennelly, Mathew (C)	.204	53	181	19	37	7	1	2	14	24	28	1
Miles, Cole (OF)	.253	72	273	39	69	3	6	0	16	29	53	26
Nelson, Dan (INF)	.278	57	209	40	58	14	0	7	34	30	34	3
Rodriguez, Gerardo (OF/1B)	.239	40	163	32	39	8	3	8	24	10	65	2
Sime, Samuel (INF)	.260	59	219	16	57	9	1	2	20	13	45	1
Sucre, Jesus (C)	.220	48	191	14	42	9	0	5	22	7	26	4
Sumoza, Luis (OF)	.245	41	147	9	36	4	2	1	10	8	40	3
Ware, L.V. (OF)	.233	34	116	21	27	4	1	1	11	10	38	6

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Abreu, Juan	0-0	8.22	8	0	1	15.1	14	14	14	8	15	.241
Avilan, Luis	1-1	2.89	14	0	4	18.2	10	6	6	8	18	.159
Castro, Yelior	4-2	3.96	23	2	0	50.0	40	29	22	35	51	.221
Clemens, Paul	0-2	4.50	14	2	1	28.0	32	23	14	16	24	.278
Crim, Matthew	4-8	4.87	18	13	0	92.1	105	64	50	35	55	.285
Delgado, Randall	3-6	2.82	18	18	0	105.1	82	43	33	26	108	.214
Francis, David	2-3	4.19	20	0	0	38.2	46	21	18	22	29	.297
Harris, Tyrelle	0-1	4.76	12	0	1	17.0	17	9	9	9	24	.266
Hoover, J.J.	6-5	3.83	17	17	0	91.2	94	44	39	23	74	.260
Oberholtzer, Brett	2-3	4.47	11	8	2	52.1	66	27	26	8	39	.314
Ortega, Jose	2-4	5.14	7	7	0	28.0	41	20	16	7	14	.342
Paulino, Angelo	2-3	2.65	26	0	1	51.0	56	18	15	17	43	.287
Pruneda, Benino	1-1	2.70	20	0	5	30.0	25	14	9	14	44	.223
Rodgers, Chad	1-5	4.88	17	0	0	27.2	27	18	15	18	24	.260
Spruill, Zeke	0-1	9.00	4	3	0	14.0	20	14	14	1	12	.328
Teheran, Julio	3-3	2.92	8	8	0	49.1	45	17	16	12	58	.238



ROME

38-46

SOUTH ATLANTIC LEAGUE CLASS A | STATE MUTUAL STADIUM (706) 368-9388

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Bethancourt, Christian (C)	.242	60	227	20	55	11	0	2	25	9	30	2
Curley, Chris (3B)	.211	31	109	9	23	2	1	0	11	4	22	0
Flores, Ramon (OF)	.231	25	91	10	21	3	2	1	7	2	16	4
Hanson, Jake (OF)	.256	44	156	19	40	10	2	2	21	7	51	4
Harrilchak, Cory (OF)	.306	60	219	31	67	10	3	1	22	24	24	18
Hefflinger, Robert (OF/1B)	.250	57	212	22	53	16	0	4	43	18	69	1
Jones, Mycal (SS)	.261	53	199	27	52	12	0	6	34	11	48	6
Kreke, Jordan (3B/SS)	.252	72	270	35	68	14	1	0	32	24	49	7
Lovett, Chris (2B)	.239	30	92	11	22	5	1	0	2	9	13	0
Marval, Osman (1B/C)	.243	22	70	7	17	2	0	1	9	6	11	0
Rose, Kyle (OF)	.273	68	253	40	69	4	3	0	15	20	52	19
Schlehuber, Braeden (C)	.231	45	143	15	33	6	0	1	13	6	17	2
Spanjer-Lustenborg, Rlaan (1B)	.311	20	74	8	23	5	1	0	7	8	12	0
Ware, L.V. (OF)	.222	38	126	20	28	4	1	1	11	8	27	16
Weaver, Matthew (INF)	.230	66	230	19	53	13	2	0	22	13	61	3
Whitmer, Jace (1B)	.287	24	87	10	25	6	1	1	10	1	7	0

**DANVILLE****8-9****APPALACHIAN LEAGUE**
ROOKIE ADVANCED**LEGION FIELD**
(434) 797-3792

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Dalfonso, Jakob (1B)	.263	8	19	3	5	2	0	0	3	1	4	0
Delgado, Ryan (C)	.333	10	30	4	10	4	0	2	8	2	6	0
Falcon, Daniel (OF)	.208	16	53	5	11	3	0	3	9	1	11	0
Fleming, Kenny (OF)	.241	12	29	4	7	0	2	0	1	3	7	1
Flores, Ramon (OF)	.333	8	36	6	12	2	0	0	4	1	8	1
Friereson, Jarred (2B/OF)	.313	7	16	3	5	1	1	0	1	3	4	0
Gattis, Evan (C)	.354	13	48	6	17	5	0	0	6	1	5	0
Kleinknecht, Barrett (INF)	.167	8	30	3	5	1	0	1	5	0	6	0
Leonard, Joe (3B)	.360	6	25	5	9	2	0	1	5	1	4	0
Mowry, Jason (OF)	.294	15	51	3	15	3	0	0	3	3	4	0
Odreman, Alberto (1B)	.258	11	31	5	8	2	0	1	4	5	7	0
Rauh, Bobby (OF)	.261	9	23	7	6	1	0	0	0	3	4	0
Reyes, Elmer (2B)	.156	9	32	3	5	2	0	0	1	0	6	0
Simmons, Andrelton (SS)	.212	14	52	7	11	1	0	1	8	3	4	3
Terdoslavich, Joseph (3B)	.222	16	63	6	14	2	1	0	6	2	9	1
Whitmer, Jace (C)	.325	12	40	5	13	3	0	0	5	4	3	0

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Acord, Dalton	0-0	4.26	4	0	1	6.1	7	3	3	7	11	.280
Farrell, Kyle	1-1	5.25	3	2	0	12.0	14	7	7	4	8	.304
Filak, David	0-1	2.00	3	3	0	9.0	5	2	2	5	9	.156
Fouch, Matt	0-0	0.00	2	0	0	4.0	0	0	0	1	7	.000
Hayes, Jamie	0-0	4.26	3	0	0	6.1	4	3	3	2	4	.190
La Point, Lucas	1-2	4.24	3	3	0	17.0	13	8	8	3	15	.217
Lewis, Matthew	0-1	6.23	4	0	0	8.2	11	10	6	8	8	.289
Mora, Edigson	0-2	4.70	4	0	1	7.2	8	6	4	7	6	.267
Northcraft, Aaron	1-0	8.10	3	2	0	10.0	15	9	9	2	7	.375
Pacheco, Ronan	0-1	4.50	4	1	2	10.0	11	8	5	3	12	.256
Perez, Carlos	1-0	0.48	4	4	0	18.2	10	4	1	10	17	.159
Stovall, Tyler	0-0	2.16	5	0	0	8.1	3	2	2	5	10	.111
Suschak, Matthew	1-1	6.23	4	0	0	8.2	12	6	6	5	7	.343
Weber, Ryan	2-0	1.04	3	2	0	17.1	12	3	2	1	10	.194

**GULF COAST****9-7****GULF COAST LEAGUE**
ROOKIE**CHAMPION STADIUM AT DISNEY**
(407) 939-2301

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Beckwith, William (1B)	.284	12	42	4	12	3	0	2	11	6	6	2
Brownsten, Cory (C)	.364	7	22	5	8	1	1	0	3	3	3	0
Cadette, Victor (OF)	.190	8	21	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	7	0
Contreras, Luis (OF)	.273	5	11	4	3	0	1	0	3	1	2	0
De Los Santos, Fernando (INF)	.316	13	38	7	12	4	0	0	3	5	8	2
De Los Santos, Ramon (C)	.273	6	11	3	3	0	0	1	4	0	1	0
Drury, Brandon (3B)	.208	13	48	7	10	1	0	0	1	3	14	0
Fleming, Kurt (OF)	.255	14	55	8	14	0	1	0	4	3	10	2
Lipka, Matt (SS)	.300	13	50	5	15	3	0	0	5	5	4	2
Marin, Ivan (2B/SS)	.263	9	19	2	5	1	0	0	5	3	3	0
Query, Ryan (C)	.200	7	25	3	5	0	0	2	3	0	5	0
Reyes, Elmer (2B/SS)	.364	6	22	8	8	0	0	1	5	2	5	3
Rivera, Wilson (OF)	.209	14	43	5	9	2	1	1	8	6	7	2
Rohm, David (1A)	.273	14	55	7	15	1	0	0	5	5	5	1
Sanchez, Edison (3B)	.304	15	46	6	14	5	0	1	5	9	13	0

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Alvarez, Danilo	0-1	3.00	3	0	0	6.0	7	2	2	1	6	.292
Burns, Jonathan	1-1	2.45	5	0	0	7.1	6	2	2	2	6	.222
Coffield, Kyle	0-1	6.00	2	2	0	3.0	4	2	2	1	3	.333
De Luna, Luis	0-0	2.57	4	3	1	14.0	18	6	4	4	13	.310
Foster, Stephen	0-0	2.08	4	0	0	4.1	2	1	1	1	1	.143
Gaxiola, Amilcar	0-1	3.12	4	0	0	8.2	7	5	3	1	11	.212
Jurik, Dan	0-0	2.25	3	1	0	8.0	6	5	2	1	5	.194
Kempf, Willie	2-0	0.00	3	1	0	11.0	6	0	0	3	12	.158
Marshall, Ian	2-1	3.75	4	1	0	12.0	9	5	5	3	13	.205
Mertins, Kyle	0-0	3.00	4	0	2	6.0	4	2	2	2	1	.182
Perez, Williams	0-0	6.08	3	2	0	13.1	13	9	9	2	11	.271
Sekiguchi, Shohei	1-1	5.79	4	0	0	4.2	6	4	3	2	2	.316
Silva, Ernesto	0-1	8.31	3	2	0	8.2	17	10	8	4	8	.405
Spruill, Zeke	0-0	3.00	2	2	0	3.0	4	1	1	1	1	.333
Winnie, Dan	2-0	5.40	4	2	0	11.2	15	7	7	3	9	.319
Yamarin, Yoshinori	1-0	3.12	4	0	0	8.2	7	3	3	4	5	.233

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 45

May. Through his first 60 2/3 innings, the righthander allowed only 50 hits and struck out 51...

Relief seems to agree with **David Hale**, Atlanta's second pick in the 2009 draft. Hale was 2-2 with a 2.38 ERA and three saves in seven relief outings compared to 0-5 with a 9.00 ERA in seven starts...

R-Braves general manager **Mike Dunn** was inducted to the South Atlantic League Hall of Fame during the All-Star Game festivities in Greenville, S.C., on June 22.

**DANVILLE**

ROOKIE ADVANCED

THE D-BRAVES lost their hottest hitter when outfielder **Ramon Flores** was promoted to Rome at the end of June. Flores went 12-for-36 with two doubles, six runs and four RBIs in eight games at Danville, and owned a seven-game hitting streak at the time of his promotion...

Third-round draft pick **Joe Leonard**, the 2010 Big East Player of the Year and a second-team All-American who hit .433 this past season for the University of Pittsburgh, made his professional debut at third base for the D-Braves on July 3. Leonard opened his pro career by going 6-for-13 (.462) in his

first three games...

Infielder **Elmer Reyes** joined the D-Braves on June 28 when infielder **Robert Brooks** was released. Brooks, Atlanta's 20th-round pick in 2008 out of Auburn, led the GCL Braves with a .329 batting average that year before missing all of 2009 while recovering from right shoulder surgery. Brooks went 1-for-13 in four games with Danville this season. Reyes, a 19-year-old from Nicaragua, hit .275 last year in the Dominican Summer League and .364 (8-for-22) with hits in all six games with the GCL Braves this season prior to joining Danville...

After going 0-4 with a 7.33 ERA in 12 games at Rome this season, **Ryan Weber** allowed only two earned runs in his first two starts with Danville. The righthander pitched six shutout innings in his first start while limiting Princeton to four hits to earn the victory...

The D-Braves have had dominant pitchers in the Appy League for the past several seasons. The early candidate this year is lefthander **Carlos Perez**, who was 1-0 with a 0.53 ERA in his first three starts. The Dominican Republic native surrendered only one earned run in his first 17 innings while striking out 16 and limiting opponents to a .172 batting average...

The D-Braves opened the season 5-0,

with all five games coming on the road. Success has become commonplace for Danville under manager **Paul Runge**, who entered the season ranked fourth on the all-time wins list in Appalachian League history with 245. This is Runge's sixth consecutive season and eighth overall as a manager at Danville.

**GULF COAST**

ROOKIE

RIGHT-HANDED pitcher **Willie Kempf** was promoted to Danville from the Gulf Coast League on July 3. Kempf, Atlanta's 27th-round pick in the 2010 draft out of Baylor, led the GCL with two wins and a 0.00 ERA at the time of his promotion. He allowed six hits and three walks while striking out 12 in 11 innings...

Outfielder **David Rohm** began his pro career with a five-game hitting streak, including two-hit outings in his first four games. Rohm was selected in the ninth round in June out of Fresno (Calif.) Community College...

Shortstop **Matt Lipka**, the Braves' first draft pick in June, had five multi-hit games in his first 12, including three straight from June 30-July 3... **William Beckwith** had RBIs in four straight games from June 29-July 3.



TO PURCHASE TICKETS OR FOR TICKET INFORMATION,
CALL (404) 577-9100 OR VISIT braves.com

INDIVIDUAL GAME TICKETS

Single game tickets are available at braves.com/tickets, the Braves box office at Turner Field, by calling 1-800-745-3000, and at all TicketMaster outlets.

LOCATION	PRICE	PREMIUM*
Skyline#	\$1	\$1
Upper Pavilion	\$6	\$8
Upper Reserved	\$8	\$12
Upper Box	\$12	\$16
Terrace Reserved	\$24	\$28
Field/Terrace Pavilion	\$24	\$28
Field Reserved	\$28	\$32
Golden Moon Casino Pavilion	\$28	\$32
Terrace Level	\$36	\$40
Field Level	\$38	\$42
Golden Moon Casino Level	\$44	\$48
Dugout Level	\$64	\$68
Henry Aaron Seats	\$74	\$78

#Available only at Turner Field two and a half hours before games.

*Premium games include all Friday and Saturday games.

2-FOR-1 TICKETS

- * **Mondays** 2 Golden Moon Casino Pavilion for \$28
- * **Tuesdays** 2 Upper Reserved for \$8
- * **Wednesdays** 2 Field/Terrace Pavilion for \$24
- * Fans with college or military ID or a AAA card also can purchase two Upper Box tickets for the price of one.

\$1 TICKETS

* **\$1 SkyLine Seats** - Available two and a half hours before every game at the Turner Field Ticket Office.

* **Buck Belue Buck Night** - \$1 Tickets for all Upper Reserved Seats On Following Mondays (all 7:10 p.m.): June 28 vs. Nationals, Aug. 2 vs. Mets, Aug. 16 vs. Dodgers, Aug. 30 vs. Mets, Sept. 13 vs. Nationals, Sept. 27 vs. Marlins.

FAMILY VALUE PLAN

Get 4 tickets, 4 hotdogs, 4 Cokes, a parking pass, a program and \$5 Chevron gift card for as low as \$59 (upper box seats). Upgrade to Outfield Pavilion for \$79 (total) or Golden Moon Casino Pavilion for \$99 (total).

PRORATED PACKAGES

Season Tickets, Half-Season Tickets And Weekend Packages Are Available On A Prorated Pricing Basis. Call (404) 577-9100 For Details.

5-GAME PLAN

NL EAST

Aug. 2 vs. Mets, Aug. 17 vs. Nationals, Aug. 27 vs. Marlins, Sept. 2 vs. Mets, Oct. 3 vs. Phillies.

FLEX PLANS

- * Minimum of 10 games for as low as \$110 per seat.
- * Change dates if your plans change.

Section	Gate Price	Flex Price
Golden Moon	\$44/48	\$42
Field Level	\$38/42	\$37
Terrace	\$36/40	\$35
Field/Terrace Pavilion	\$24/28	\$22
Upper Box	\$12/16	\$11

GROUP TICKETS

Groups of 20 or more receive discounted prices. Call (404) 577-9100 for information.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU

The Braves are offering all fans a birthday present - a free ticket to a game at Turner Field. Fans can go to braves.com/birthday to register for their free ticket to a game.

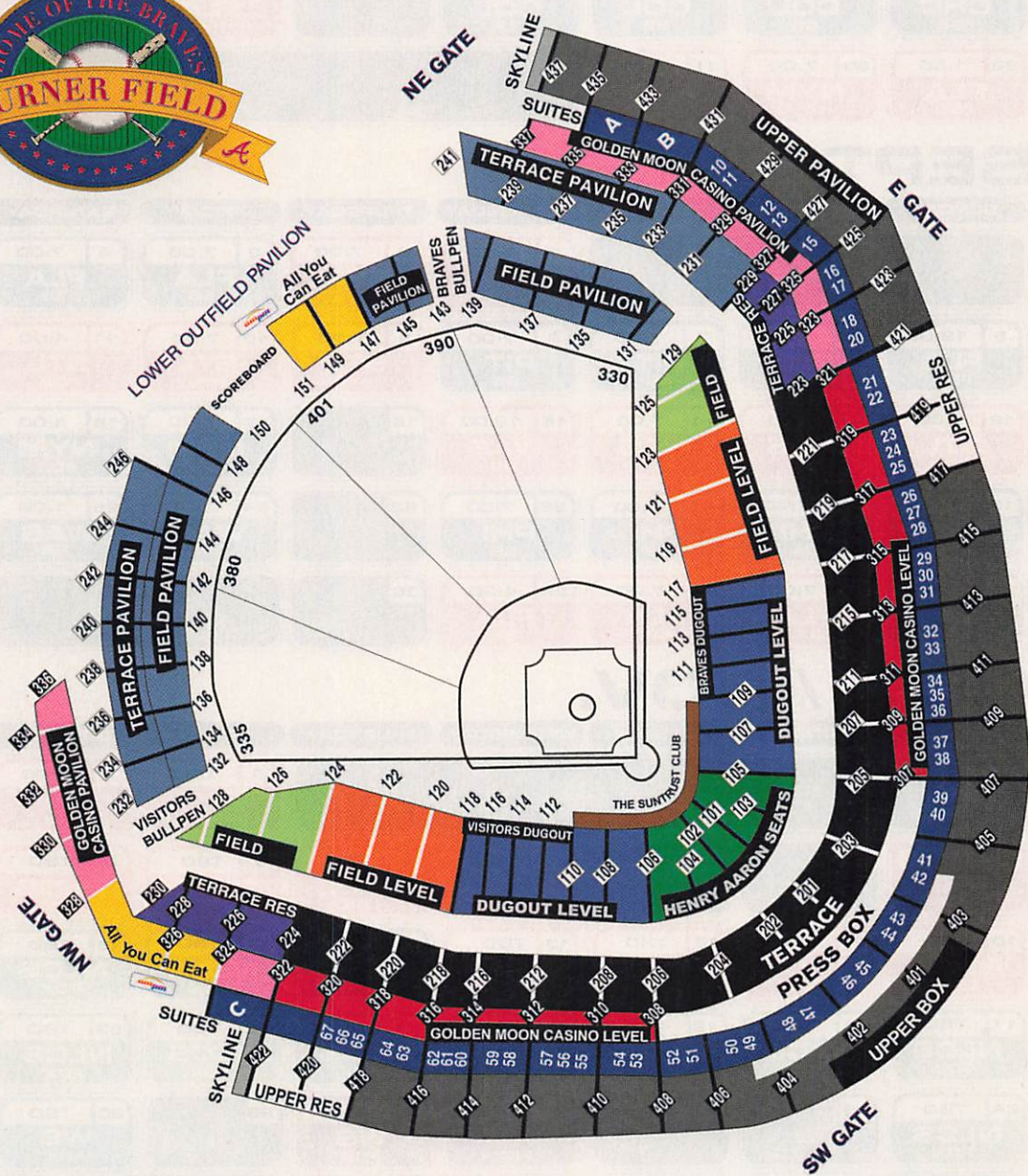
PRIVATE SUITES

Located on the Golden Moon Casino Level. Climate controlled suite plus access to outside balcony seating. TVs, refrigerator, icemaker, wet bar and telephone. Available from two hours before the game until the last pitch. Call (404) 577-9100.

BATTING PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

The Braves VIP Batting Practice Experience allows fans to get up close with the players during pre-game BP. The Batting Practice Experience begins three hours prior to the first pitch and is not available before Sunday home games or before afternoon games. The

cost is \$55 for Monday-Thursday games and \$70 for Friday-Saturday games. Groups of 20 or more receive discounted rates (call 404-577-9100). BP Experience tickets do not include a game ticket. A separate game ticket must be purchased.



JULY / AUGUST

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
25 1:00 FLA FSS	26	27 7:00 WAS SS	28 7:00 WAS SS	29 12:30 WAS SS	30 7:00 CIN SS	31 4:00 CIN FOX
1 1:00 CIN FSS	2 7:00 NYM ESPN	3 7:00 NYM PTV	4 7:00 NYM PTV	5 7:00 SF PTV	6 7:30 SF PTV	7 7:00 SF FSS
8 1:30 SF FSS	9 8:00 HOU SS	10 8:00 HOU SS	11 2:00 HOU SS	12	13 7:30 LA PTV	14 7:00 LA PTV
15 1:30 LA FSS	16 7:00 LA PTV	17 7:00 WAS SS	18 7:00 WAS SS	19 1:00 WAS SS	20 2:00 CHC SS	21 4:00 CHC FOX
22 2:00 CHC FSS	23 8:30 COL SS	24 8:30 COL SS	25 3:00 COL SS	26	27 7:30 FLA SS	28 4:00 FLA FOX
29 1:30 FLA FSS	30 7:00 NYM PTV	31 7:00 NYM PTV				

SEPT

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 7:00 NYM PTV/ESPN	2 7:00 NYM PTV	3 7:00 FLA SS	4 7:00 FLA SS
5 12:00 FLA FSS	6 1:30 PIT SS	7 7:00 PIT SS	8 7:00 PIT SS	9 7:00 STL PTV	10 7:30 STL PTV	11 4:00 STL FOX
12 1:30 STL FSS	13 7:00 WAS SS	14 7:00 WAS SS	15 12:00 WAS SS	16	17 7:00 NYM SS	18 4:00 NYM FOX
19 1:00 NYM FSS	20 7:00 PHI SS	21 7:00 PHI SS	22 7:00 PHI SS	23	24 7:00 WAS SS	25 1:00 WAS SS
26 1:30 WAS FSS	27 7:00 FLA SS	28 7:00 FLA SS	29 4:30 FLA SS	30		

OCT. / NOV.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 7:30 PHI SS	2 7:00 PHI SS
3 1:30 PHI FSS	4	5	6 TBD NLDS TBS	7 TBD NLDS TBS	8 TBD NLDS TBS	9 TBD NLDS TBS
10 TBD NLDS TBS	11 TBD NLDS TBS	12 TBD NLDS TBS	13 TBD NLDS TBS	14	15 TBD NLCS FOX	16 TBD NLCS FOX
17 TBD NLCS FOX	18 TBD NLCS FOX	19 TBD NLCS FOX	20 TBD NLCS FOX	21 TBD NLCS FOX	22 TBD NLCS FOX	23 TBD NLCS FOX
24 TBD NLCS FOX	25	26	27 TBD WS FOX	28 TBD WS FOX	29	30 TBD WS FOX
31 TBD WS FOX	1 TBD WS* FOX	2	3 TBD WS* FOX	4 TBD WS* FOX		

POST-SEASON DATES ARE TENTATIVE, UNOFFICIAL AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

*If Necessary

2010 SCHEDULE

2010 SCHEDULE

ALL GAMES ON
ROCK 100.5,
680 THE FAN,
AND RADIO
NETWORK
AFFILIATES.

ROCK 100.5
ATLANTA'S ROCK STATION

SPORTS RADIO
680
The Fan

FSS FSSOUTH

PTV Peachtree TV

SS SPORTSOUTH

FOX FOX

ESPN ESPN

NL
HOME
GAME

AL
HOME
GAME

INDIVIDUAL STATS

THROUGH JULY 11

	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	TB	BB	SO	SB	CS	OBP	SLG	E
BATTERS																	
INFANTE	.332	63	193	26	64	8	0	2	24	78	9	35	3	3	.358	.404	7
BLANCO	.327	34	55	9	18	1	1	0	3	21	8	13	1	2	.413	.382	1
PRADO	.325	87	372	61	121	25	2	10	39	180	26	54	4	3	.367	.484	4
ROSS	.279	30	68	8	19	5	0	0	17	24	12	13	0	1	.395	.353	1
HINSKE	.274	73	175	26	48	16	1	6	34	84	18	47	0	0	.337	.480	1
McCANN	.267	76	255	40	68	16	0	10	37	114	42	52	3	1	.380	.447	7
CABRERA	.259	85	270	29	70	13	1	3	24	94	22	37	4	1	.316	.348	2
RIGHT	.263		80		21	6	0	0	5	27	8	9			.337	.338	
LEFT	.258		190		49	7	1	3	19	67	14	28			.307	.353	
CONRAD	.250	56	72	16	18	7	0	4	16	37	6	23	4	0	.316	.514	1
RIGHT	.167		12		2	1	0	0	3	3	2	5			.286	.250	
LEFT	.267		60		16	6	0	4	13	34	4	18			.323	.567	
GLAUS	.254	85	295	43	75	13	0	14	58	130	49	70	0	0	.361	.441	6
JONES	.252	72	242	33	61	16	0	6	33	95	50	40	5	0	.378	.393	7
RIGHT	.241		79		19	3	0	2	6	28	17	13			.375	.354	
LEFT	.258		163		42	13	0	4	27	67	33	27			.379	.411	
HEYWARD	.251	71	255	41	64	13	3	11	45	116	42	68	5	4	.366	.455	4
CLEVEL	.250	3	4	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	.250	.500	0
ESCOBAR	.238	75	261	28	62	12	0	0	19	74	37	31	5	1	.334	.284	9
DIAZ	.227	35	97	8	22	7	1	1	8	34	5	23	2	0	.265	.351	1
McLOUTH	.176	57	170	20	30	9	0	3	14	48	26	46	4	2	.295	.282	1
HICKS	.000	13	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	.167	.000	0
ATLANTA	.260	88	2,951	406	767	168	9	70	383	1,163	364	615	40	18	.343	.394	61
OPPONENTS	.246	88	2,891	337	711	140	15	67	325	1,082	286	636	53	24	.318	.374	58

PINCH-HITTERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) Jones (.667-2-0-2), McLouth (.500-2-0-0), Heyward (.500-1-0-2), Blanco (.500-1-0-0), Cabrera (.429-3-0-0), Infante (.300-3-0-1), Hinske (.292-7-1-5), McCann (.250-1-0-1), Conrad (.235-8-2-6), Diaz (.231-3-0-0), Glaus (.000-0-0-0), Hicks (.000-0-0-0), Ross (.000-0-0-0). **TEAM** (.274-31-3-17).

PITCHERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) Hudson (.268-11-0-3), Medlen (.182-4-0-2), Hanson (.156-5-0-3), Lowe (.111-3-0-3), Jurrjens (.100-1-0-1), Kawakami (.087-2-0-0), Chavez (.000-0-0-0), Saito (.000-0-0-0), Venters (.000-0-0-0). **STAFF** (.165-26-0-12).

KEY

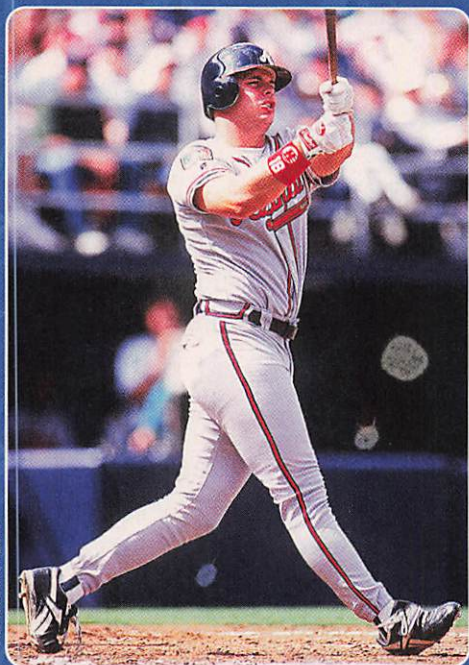
AVG-Batting average, SLG-Slugging percentage, OBP-On-base percentage, G-Games, AB-At-bats, R-Runs, H-Hits, 2B-Doubles, 3B-Triples, HR-Home runs, RBI-Runs batted in, TB-Total bases, BB-Walks, SO-Strikeouts, SB-Stolen bases, CS-Caught stealing, E-Errors, W-L-Wins-Losses, ERA-Earned run average, GS-Starts, GF-Games finished, SV-Saves, IP-Innings pitched, HB-Hit batters, WP-Wild pitches, OBA-Opponents' batting average.

	W-L	ERA	G	GS	GF	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	HB	BB	SO	WP	OBA
PITCHERS																
WAGNER	5-0	1.21	38	0	36	20	37.1	20	5	5	3	1	12	56	2	.156
VENTERS	3-0	1.30	36	0	10	1	41.2	25	10	6	0	3	21	43	2	.175
HUDSON	9-4	2.30	18	18	0	0	121.1	94	32	31	9	4	43	61	3	.219
O'FLAHERTY	3-1	2.30	41	0	6	0	31.1	25	10	8	1	1	13	27	2	.221
MOYLAN	3-1	2.91	46	0	3	1	34	32	11	11	2	1	19	31	2	.258
MEDLEN	6-1	3.16	25	11	3	0	88.1	85	34	31	11	2	17	65	1	.261
SAITO	1-3	3.71	35	0	8	0	34	29	15	14	3	0	12	41	2	.225
HANSON	8-5	4.13	18	18	0	0	102.1	106	50	47	7	10	34	104	3	.271
LOWE	9-8	4.35	19	19	0	0	113.2	116	57	55	9	3	44	70	3	.270
KAWAKAMI	1-9	4.48	15	15	0	0	82.1	87	48	41	9	1	28	57	3	.271
JURRJENS	1-3	5.40	7	7	0	0	35	30	23	21	4	1	16	25	1	.231
CHAVEZ	1-1	5.63	22	0	14	0	32	31	20	20	5	1	10	27	0	.254
RESOP	0-0	22.50	1	0	0	0	2	5	5	5	0	0	3	2	0	.455
ATLANTA	52-36	3.60	88	88	86	22	777.2	711	337	311	67	28	286	636	26	.246
OPPONENTS	36-52	4.26	88	88	84	18	773	767	406	366	70	22	364	615	39	.260

BY GAME

GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRs	REC	POS	GB
1	4/5	CHC	H	W	16-5	Lowe (1-0)	Heyward (1), McCann (1)	1-0	T-1	—
2	4/7	CHC	H	W	3-2	Moylan (1-0)	Jones (1)	2-0	T-1	—
3	4/8	CHC	H	L	0-2	Hanson (0-1)	—	2-1	T-1	—
4	4/9	SF	A	L	4-5 (13)	Medlen (0-1)	—	2-2	3	-1
5	4/10	SF	A	W	7-2	Lowe (2-0)	Heyward (2)	3-2	2	-1
6	4/11	SF	A	L	3-6	Kawakami (0-1)	McCann (2), Heyward (3)	3-3	3	-2
7	4/12	SD	A	L	2-17	Jurrjens (0-1)	—	3-4	3	-3
8	4/14	SD	A	W	6-1	Hanson (1-1)	Glaus (1)	4-4	3	-3
9	4/15	SD	A	W	6-2	Hudson (1-0)	Prado (1)	5-4	T-2	-2
10	4/16	COL	H	W	9-5	Lowe (3-0)	Jones (2)	6-4	2	-2
11	4/17	COL	H	L	0-4	Kawakami (0-2)	--	6-5	T-3	-2
12	4/18	COL	H	W	4-3	O'Flaherty (1-0)	--	7-5	3	-1
13	4/20	PHI	H	W	4-3 (10)	Wagner (1-0)	Glaus (2), Heyward (4), McLouth (1)	8-5	1	T-1
14	4/21	PHI	H	L	0-2	Hudson (1-1)	--	8-6	2	-1
15	4/22	PHI	H	L	3-8	Lowe (3-1)	--	8-7	3	-2
16	4/23	NYM	A	L	2-5	Kawakami (0-3)	--	8-8	4	-2
17	4/24	NYM	A	L	1-3	Jurrjens (0-2)	--	8-9	5	-3
18	4/25	NYM	A	L	0-1	Hanson (1-2)	--	8-10	5	-3
19	4/26	STL	A	L	3-4	Saito (0-1)	--	8-11	5	-3
20	4/27	STL	A	L	4-5	Lowe (3-2)	--	8-12	5	-3 ½
21	4/28	STL	A	L	0-6	Kawakami (0-4)	--	8-13	5	-4 ½
22	4/29	STL	A	L	4-10	Jurrjens (0-3)	Heyward (5)	8-14	5	-4 ½
23	4/30	HOU	H	W	4-2	Hanson (2-2)	McLouth (2), Heyward (6)	9-14	5	-5
24	5/1	HOU	H	W	10-1	Hudson (2-1)	Heyward (7)	10-14	5	-4
25	5/2	HOU	H	W	7-1	Lowe (4-2)	--	11-14	5	-3 ½
26	5/4	WAS	A	L	3-6	Kawakami (0-5)	Heyward (8)	11-15	5	-4
27	5/5	WAS	A	W	7-6 (10)	Medlen (1-1)	Infante (1)	12-15	5	-4
28	5/6	WAS	A	L	2-3 (10)	O'Flaherty (1-1)	--	12-16	5	-5
29	5/7	PHI	A	L	0-7	Lowe (4-3)	--	12-17	5	-6
30	5/8	PHI	A	W	4-1	O'Flaherty (2-1)	--	13-17	5	-5
31	5/9	PHI	A	L	3-5	Kawakami (0-6)	--	13-18	5	-6
32	5/10	MIL	A	W	8-2	Hanson (3-2)	Glaus (3), Prado (2)	14-18	5	-6
33	5/11	MIL	A	W	11-3	Hudson (3-1)	Glaus (4), Conrad (1)	15-18	5	-5 ½
34	5/12	MIL	A	W	9-2	Lowe (5-3)	Conrad (2)	16-18	T-4	-4 ½
35	5/14	ARZ	H	W	6-5	Wagner (2-0)	McCann (3), McLouth (3)	17-18	5	-4 ½
36	5/15	ARZ	H	L	1-11	Hanson (3-3)	--	17-19	5	-5 ½
37	5/16	ARZ	H	W	13-1	Hudson (4-1)	Prado 2 (4), Glaus (5), Hinske (1)	18-19	4	-5 ½
38	5/17	NYM	H	L	2-3	Lowe (5-4)	Hinske (2)	18-20	5	-6 ½
39	5/18	NYM	H	W	3-2	Wagner (3-0)	Glaus (6)	19-20	4	-5 ½
40	5/19	CIN	H	W	5-4	Wagner (4-0)	McCann (4)	20-20	4	-4 ½
41	5/20	CIN	H	W	10-9	Kimbrel (1-0)	Conrad (3)	21-20	3	-4 ½
42	5/21	PIT	A	W	7-0	Hudson (5-1)	Heyward (9), McCann (5)	22-20	2	-4 ½
43	5/22	PIT	A	W	4-2	Lowe (6-4)	Cabrera (1), Hinske (3)	23-20	2	-3 ½

GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRs	REC	POS	GB
44	5/23	PIT	A	L	2-3 (10)	Saito (0-2)	Hinske (4)	23-21	2	-3 ½
45	5/25	FLA	A	L	4-6	Kawakami (0-7)	--	23-22	3	-3 ½
46	5/26	FLA	A	W	7-3	Hanson (4-3)	--	24-22	2	-2 ½
47	5/27	FLA	A	W	8-3	Moylan (2-0)	--	25-22	2	-1 ½
48	5/28	PIT	H	W	7-3	Lowe (7-4)	--	26-22	2	-1 ½
49	5/29	PIT	H	W	6-3	Medlen (2-1)	Heyward (10)	27-22	2	-1 ½
50	5/30	PIT	H	W	5-2	Saito (1-2)	Glaus (7)	28-22	2	-1/2
51	5/31	PHI	H	W	9-3	Hanson (5-3)	Jones (3), Glaus (8)	29-22	1	+1/2
52	6/1	PHI	H	W	7-3	Hudson (6-1)	Glaus (9)	30-22	1	+1 ½
53	6/2	PHI	H	W	2-1	Lowe (8-4)	--	31-22	1	+2 ½
54	6/3	LAD	A	W	4-3	Medlen (3-1)	Glaus (10)	32-22	1	+3
55	6/4	LAD	A	L	4-5	Kawakami (0-8)	--	32-23	1	+2
56	6/5	LAD	A	W	9-3	Hanson (6-3)	Glaus (11)	33-23	1	+2
57	6/6	LAD	A	L	4-5 (10)	Chavez (0-1)	Prado (5), McCann (6)	33-24	1	+2
58	6/7	ARZ	A	L	4-7	Lowe (8-5)	--	33-25	1	+2
59	6/8	ARZ	A	W	7-5	Venters (1-0)	--	34-25	1	+2
60	6/9	ARZ	A	L	1-2	Moylan (2-1)	--	34-26	1	+1 ½
61	6/10	ARZ	A	W	11-7	Moylan (3-1)	--	35-26	1	+2 ½
62	6/11	MIN	A	L	1-2	Hudson (6-2)	--	35-27	1	+1 ½
63	6/12	MIN	A	W	3-2	Venters (2-0)	Cabrera (2)	36-27	1	+1 ½
64	6/13	MIN	A	W	7-3	Medlen (4-1)	Prado (6), Glaus 2 (13)	37-27	1	+1 ½
65	6/15	TAM	H	L	4-10	Kawakami (0-9)	Jones (4)	37-28	1	+1/2
66	6/16	TAM	H	W	6-2	Hanson (7-3)	Hinske (5)	38-28	1	+1/2
67	6/17	TAM	H	W	3-1	Hudson (7-2)	Heyward (12)	39-28	1	+1/2
68	6/18	KC	H	W	6-4	Lowe (9-5)	--	40-28	1	+1/2
69	6/19	KC	H	W	5-4	Wagner (5-0)	McCann (7), Glaus (14)	41-28	1	+1 ½
70	6/20	KC	H	W	8-5	Kimbrel (2-0)	--	42-28	1	+2 ½
71	6/22	CWS	A	L	6-9	Hanson (7-4)	Prado (7), McCann (8)	42-29	1	+1 ½
72	6/23	CWS	A	L	2-4	Hudson (7-3)	--	42-30	1	+1/2
73	6/24	CWS	A	L	0-2	Saito (1-3)	--	42-31	1	+1/2
74	6/25	DET	H	W	3-1	Medlen (5-1)	McCann (9), Conrad (4)	43-31	1	+1/2
75	6/26	DET	H	W	4-3	Kawakami (1-9)	Jones (5)	44-31	1	+1 ½
76	6/27	DET	H	L	4-10	Hanson (7-5)	--	44-32	1	+1/2
77	6/28	WAS	H	W	5-0	Hudson (8-3)	--	45-32	1	+1 ½
78	6/29	WAS	H	L	2-7	Lowe (9-6)	--	45-33	1	+1 ½
79	6/30	WAS	H	W	4-1	Jurrjens (1-3)	--	46-33	1	+1 ½
80	7/2	FLA	H	W	4-3 (11)	Venters (3-0)	--	47-33	1	+2
81	7/3	FLA	H	W	4-1	Hanson (8-5)	--	48-33	1	+3
82	7/4	FLA	H	L	2-3	Hudson (8-4)	McCann (10)	48-34	1	+2
83	7/5	PHI	A	L	1-3	Lowe (9-7)	Jones (6)	48-35	1	+2
84	7/6	PHI	A	W	6-3 (11)	Chavez (1-1)	Prado (8), Hinske (6)	49-35	1	+2
85	7/7	PHI	A	W	7-5	Medlen (6-1)	Prado 2 (10), Diaz (1)	50-35	1	+3
86	7/9	NYM	A	W	4-2	O'Flaherty (3-1)	Cabrera (3), Infante (2)	51-35	1	+4
87	7/10	NYM	A	W	4-0	Hudson (9-4)	--	52-35	1	+5
88	7/11	NYM	A	L	0-3	Lowe (9-8)	--	52-36	1	+4



STEVEN D'AMICO/ALAMY

Ryan Klesko, who averaged 23 home runs per season for the Braves from 1994-99, visits a young patient as part of the Blue Ryno Foundation he founded to help critically ill children and their families.



STEVEN D'AMICO/ALAMY

CHILDREN'S ADVOCATE

RYAN KLESKO'S MANY PURSUITS INCLUDE HELPING THE CRITICALLY ILL

BY BRIAN KNAPP

NO ONE WOULD HAVE blamed Ryan Klesko had he taken the easy road in retirement, as 16 years in the major leagues exact a heavy toll on even the fittest of professional athletes. Instead, the former Braves outfielder and first baseman put the fame and fortune he attained to use for the less fortunate.

In 2005, Klesko, then a member of the San Diego Padres, founded the Blue Ryno Foundation (bluerynofoundation.org), "a nonprofit public benefit corporation organized exclusively for charitable purposes to provide support, facilities and services to critically ill children and their families."

Klesko had first-hand knowledge of such situations. His sister, a children's oncology nurse, cared for Hall of Famer Rod Carew's daughter, who died of leukemia in 1996. Klesko always felt drawn to the cause.

"I used to do a lot of work with the Make-A-Wish Foundation," he said. "To go in there and see someone... no one's had a bad day until they've gone in there with a kid who's living by the month, by the week or by the day."

The Blue Ryno Foundation provides assistance to families on a number of levels, from soliciting vouchers for meals at restaurants and lodging at hotels to flying relatives across the country to visit an ailing loved one. It even provided a retreat for one mother, scheduling a ride to and from a hairdresser and nail salon. The smallest contributions can sometimes make the biggest difference.

"We do everything we can," Klesko said. "Parents get exhausted. Sixty to 70 percent of them lose their jobs within the first year of a diagnosis. My contribution sometimes is just me saying, 'Hey, look, we're

going to raise as much money as we can and let the doctors and nurses tell us where to put it.' They know the everyday problems."

Surgeons, at the request of the Blue Ryno Foundation, have also donated their time to families who cannot afford costly procedures. Birthed in San Diego, the foundation now operates out of an office in Missouri.

"I started studying some of the problems these families were having and started finding a lot of gray areas," Klesko said. "All I needed to do was concentrate on raising some money. It's nice to be able to give back. It's an ongoing process."

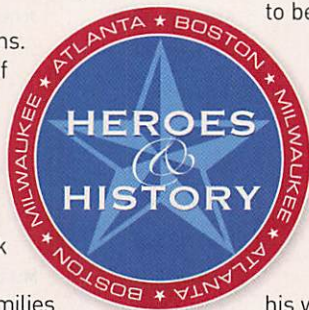
In addition to his commitments to the foundation, Klesko operates a pair of successful businesses: Grand Slam Mobile, an interactive marketing agency, and Hardcore Hunting TV, a television show which he hosts on the Pursuit Channel.

"It's not like I really retired," he said. "I've started another life, and I've been busier than I was when I was playing ball."

Klesko has his hands full at home, as well. He and his wife, Kelly, married in 2007, have a 19-month-old son, Hunter, who keeps them on their toes. Fatherhood and marriage have forever changed a man once viewed as one of Atlanta's most eligible bachelors.

"It's amazing," said Klesko, who now resides near Macon, Ga. "It's all about him. Just seeing him walk, talk and learn new things every day, it's awesome."

Klesko left baseball prior to the 2008 season. Chosen by the Braves in the fifth round of the 1989 draft, he spent the first eight seasons of



his career in an Atlanta uniform, batting .281 with 139 home runs and 450 RBIs in 792 games. Using a violent left-handed swing, he blossomed into one of the game's most feared sluggers. Between 1995 and 1997, Klesko averaged 27 homers and 82 RBIs.

A Westminster, Calif., native, he etched himself in Braves post-season lore in 1995, when he homered in three consecutive World Series games against the Cleveland Indians and helped push Atlanta to its first and only world championship.

"Words can't explain it," Klesko said. "It was like playing Wiffle ball in the backyard. When I see it, it still gives me chills."

What's more, his mother was seated in the right-field stands for Game 5 at Jacobs Field, and Klesko's two-run, ninth-inning home run off Cleveland closer Jose Mesa sailed right toward her as 43,594 others looked on.

"The ball went right for her," Klesko said, "and a guy jumped in front of her and caught it. We talked to the guy, negotiated, and eventually got the ball. My mom did so much for me. It was neat."

Klesko hit a career-high 34 homers in 1996 and helped the Braves to their second straight World Series appearance. He remained a fixture in the Atlanta lineup for three more years and became a favorite, often playing catch with fans in the left-field stands during batting practice. The Braves packaged him with second baseman Bret Boone in a 1999 trade with San Diego that brought Wally Joyner, Reggie Sanders and Quilvio Veras to Atlanta. Klesko's .525 slugging percentage still ranks fourth on the franchise's all-time list, ahead of Hall of Famer Eddie Mathews.

"I was happy and sad [with the trade]," said Klesko, who made the National League All-Star team with the Padres in 2001, when he set personal benchmarks in runs scored (105), stolen bases (23), total bases (290) and RBIs (113). "Once I found out I was going to San Diego, it was cool. I grew up not too far from there."

Klesko signed a free agent contract with the Giants prior to the 2007 season. However, the wear and tear of the day-to-day grind had his hitting production in decline, and he managed just six homers. A shoulder injury ended his career less than a year later, when he announced his retirement in April 2008. Klesko finished with a .279 batting average and 278 home runs, averaging 26 homers and 92 RBIs over a 16-year career.

"I just knew," Klesko said. "I had [surgery on my] right shoulder, and it was bothering me."

BURDETTE'S '57 RING AUCTIONS FOR \$24,031

OPPORTUNITIES to own historic memorabilia from the Milwaukee Braves only World Championship team do not come along often. So, when Lou Burdette's 1957 World Series ring went up for bid in his estate sale, fans took notice. The final bid for this coveted item reached \$24,031 during the June auction.

Burdette won three games in that World Series triumph over the Yankees. He threw shutouts in both Game 5 and the decisive Game 7.

"It was his most prized possession," said Troy R. Kinunen of MEARS Online Auctions, who hosted the estate sale in June. "He kept very good care of it. He was so proud of it. He wore it very rarely, just on special occasions."

The auction included over 400 items from Burdette's personal collection. It also featured his 1958 World Series ring, which sold for \$13,470. His 1960 Rawlings "No Hitter" Gold Glove Award, given for his Aug. 18, 1960, no-hitter against the Phillies, went for \$2,241.

Burdette, who passed away in 2007, owned special memorabilia from other former major leaguers. A baseball signed by his teammates on the 1959 National League All-Star team sold for \$448. Hall of Famers Hank Aaron, Willie Mays, Ernie Banks and Stan Musial all signed that ball.

"This is probably the most significant Milwaukee Braves collection to come to market," said Kinunen. "It's definitely the most significant 1957 Milwaukee Braves collection to ever come on the market, due to the fact that he was the MVP of the World Series. His ring is really the most important ring you could have from that World Series."

MEARS held the auction online from South Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It drew considerable interest even before starting. Kinunen said the Burdette family hated to part with the collection, but saw no practical way to split it among family members. A portion of the proceeds went to charity, and they were able to meet a special request made by the great righthander.

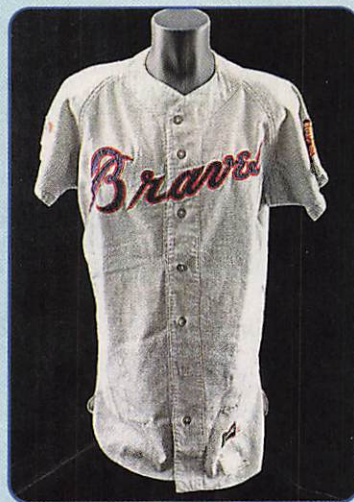
"They said that Lou always commented about how Milwaukee Braves fans are the best fans," said Kinunen. "And he really wanted it to go back to the Milwaukee Braves fans. Those were his wishes."

An autographed Atlanta Braves road jersey worn by Hank Aaron, also a member of that great 1957 Milwaukee team, sold for \$25,850 during a May auction. Aaron wore the jersey (above) for the 1968 and 1969 Braves. Josh Wulkan, vice-president of Huggins & Scott Auctions who hosted the sale, was not surprised by the sales price.

"Aaron game-used jerseys from the 1960s are a tough commodity," he said. "They're not something that you see every day."

This classic flannel jersey came from the era before major league teams began wearing polyester jerseys in the 1970s. Aaron autographed it on shirt-tail, adding even more value to the piece.

"There's sort of a phantom line that says anything 1970 and later is sort of a gray area from a collectible standpoint," said Wulkan. "But if you put 1969 and earlier on it, that carries more weight as being more vintage."



Phil Niekro (RHP, 1964-83, '87) started on the mound, worked one inning, and was credited with the victory when Team Feller beat Team Killebrew, 9-0, in the second annual Baseball Hall of Fame Classic at Doubleday Field June 21. Niekro gave up two hits but escaped without allowing a run.



At age 71, Phil Niekro shows he's still got the knuckleball, pitching a scoreless inning in the Hall of Fame Classic at Cooperstown.

John Smoltz (RHP, 1988-99, 2001-08) and **Greg Maddux** (RHP, 1993-2003) were paired together on July 16 during the first round of the American Century Championship at Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course in Stateline, Nev. Their threesome was rounded out by **Bret Saberhagen**, another former Cy Young Award winner (AL, 1985, '89). This 54-hole, \$600,000 celebrity tournament featured 82 sports and entertainment stars, including former Braves **Fred McGriff** (1B, 1993-97) and **Kenny Lofton** (OF, 1997).

Hank Aaron (OF/1B, 1954-74), **Phil Niekro** (RHP, 1964-83, '87), **Orlando Cepeda** (1B, 1969-72), **Gaylord Perry** (RHP, 1981), **Bruce Sutter** (RHP, 1985-88), **Bob Gibson** (Coach, 1982-84) and **Don Sutton** (broadcaster, 1989-2006, '09-10) were among 47 Hall of Famers scheduled to attend the annual induction ceremony at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown on July 25.

Tampa Bay's **Rafael Soriano** (RHP, 2007-09) and the Dodgers' **Rafael**

Furcal (SS, 2000-05), as well as former Braves farmhands **Adam Wainwright** (RHP, Cardinals), **Elvis Andrus** (SS, Rangers) and **Neftali Feliz** (RHP, Texas) were selected for the All-Star Game in their respective leagues. Wainwright was traded to St. Louis prior to the 2004 season in the **J.D. Drew** deal. Andrus and Feliz were sent to Texas in mid-2007 in the **Mark Teixeira** trade.

The Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) will hold its annual convention in Atlanta. In a panel discussion on Aug. 6 at 9:30 a.m., **Phil Niekro**, **Bobby Cox**, **Mark Lemke** (2B, 1988-97) and moderator **Pete Van Wieren** (broadcaster, 1976-2008) will talk about the Braves' "worst to first" evolution.

The Florida Marlins fired manager **Fredi Gonzalez** (Coach, 2003-06) and hitting coach **Jim Presley** (3B, 1990) June 23.

The second annual benefit for the **Lou Burdette** (RHP, 1951-63, Coach 1972-73) Caregiver Fund was scheduled July 23 at Tavern on the Green at Sanctuary Ridge Golf Club in Clermont, Fla. Proceeds benefit the Lou Burdette Caregiver Fund, and contributions (payable to Community Foundation of South Lake County) can be sent to 450 East Highway 50, Suite 8-C, Clermont, Fla. 34711.

Lance Niekro, 31, was hired as an assistant baseball coach at Florida Southern College, where he once was an all-American. The son of the late **Joe Niekro** (RHP, 1973-74) and nephew of **Phil Niekro** (RHP, 1964-83, '87), Lance played (1B/3B) in the majors for the Giants and tried unsuccessfully to re-invent himself as a knuckleball pitcher in the Braves' farm system last year.

Toronto signed **Nick Green** (INF, 2004).

The Giants' **Mark DeRosa** (INF/OF, 1998-2004) had season-ending surgery on his left wrist July 1.

BIRTHDAYS

AUGUST

1 ST	FREDDY GARCIA (38)
2 ND	PAUL MARAK (45)
3 RD	SID BREAM (50)
	TROY GLAUS (34)
4 TH	JOE PIGNATANO (81)
	B.J. SURHOFF (46)
5 TH	ERIC HINSKE (33)
6 TH	ANDY MESSERSMITH (65)
	BOB HORNER (53)
	STAN BELINDA (44)
	KEITH MITCHELL (41)
7 TH	RAY CRONE (79)
	BRIAN KOWITZ (41)
	EDGAR RENTERIA (35)
	TYLER YATES (33)
8 TH	CLIFF SPECK (54)
	JOHN HUDEK (44)
	MATT WHITESIDE (43)
9 TH	TED SIMMONS (61)
	DEION SANDERS (43)
	JASON HEYWARD (21)
10 TH	GERALD WILLIAMS (44)
	JORGE CAMPILLO (32)
	JOSH ANDERSON (28)
11 TH	LUIS OLMO (91)
	MELKY CABRERA (26)
12 TH	DEAN HARTGRAVES (44)
	ISMAEL VILLEGAS (34)
13 TH	BOB GIGGIE (77)
	TONY CLONINGER (70)
	MARK LEMKE (45)
	ROMAN COLON (31)
	WILL OHMAN (33)
	BOONE LOGAN (26)
15 TH	JOEY JAY (75)
	JOE COWLEY (52)
16 TH	MIKE JORGENSEN (62)
17 TH	KELLY MANN (43)
	ADAM BUTLER (37)
	JEFF RIDGWAY (30)
18 TH	BRUCE BENEDICT (55)
	TERRY BLOCKER (51)
	ALBIE LOPEZ (39)
	KEVIN BARRY (32)
	JASON PERRY (30)
19 TH	LUIS GOMEZ (59)
	TERRY HARPER (55)
	NED YOST (55)
	MATT FRANCO (41)
	LANCE CORMIER (30)
20 TH	GRAIG NETTLES (66)
21 ST	FELIX MILLAN (67)
	CRAIG ROBINSON (62)
	DERRIN EBERT (34)
	JASON MARQUIS (32)
	JESSE CHAVEZ (27)
22 ND	MILT HILL (45)
	CARL SCHUTZ (39)
23 RD	JULIO FRANCO (52)
	RANDY ST. CLAIR (50)
24 TH	EVERETT STULL (39)
	RAFAEL FURCAL (32)
25 TH	ODDIBE MCDOWELL (48)
26 TH	ALEX TREVINO (53)
	JEFF PARRETT (49)
	VICTOR ROSARIO (44)
27 TH	ANDY PRATT (31)
28 TH	TONY GONZALEZ (74)
	BILLY COWAN (72)
	TOMMY HANSON (24)
29 TH	DAVE COLE (80)
	DAVE NICHOLSON (71)
	DAN SCHNEIDER (68)
	HENRY BLANCO (39)
30 TH	FRANK FUNK (75)
	MIKE MCQUEEN (60)
	RANDY O'NEAL (50)
31 ST	DANNY LITWILER (94)
	BILL NAHORODNY (57)
	CLAUDELL WASHINGTON (56)
	TIM DREW (32)



SUBSCRIPTIONS

P.O. Box 81247
Conyers, Ga. 30013-9247
PHONE 1-877-655-CHOP (2467)
WEB Braves.com/choptalk

PUBLISHER

GARY CARUSO, President
Wonderdog Publishing, Inc.

EDITORIAL

EDITOR: Gary Caruso

COLUMNISTS: Brandon Beachy, Jay Busbee, Bobby Cox, Tommy Hanson, Carolyn Lowe, Patty Rasmussen, Ken Rosenthal (FoxSports.com), Frank Wren

REPORTERS: Bill Ballew, Jon Cooper, Steve Fall, Ray Glier, Melanie D.G. Kaplan, Brian Knapp, Brian A. Lee, Patty Rasmussen

PHOTOGRAPHERS: Tom Priddy, Patty Rasmussen, Carlos Restrepo, Bill Settliff, Allison Shirreffs, Walter Victor, Rodger Wood

CARTOONIST: Johnny Sajem

PRODUCTION

ART DIRECTOR: Clark Odom

ADVERTISING

SALES:
Richard Burg (770) 978-6297
Doug Campbell (770) 815-7506

PRINTER

Publisher's Press

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES

McMillen Communications

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Rob Calcutta

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Send address changes or corrections to:
ChopTalk, P.O. Box 81247, Conyers, Ga.
30013-9247 or call 1-877-655-CHOP
(2467) or visit braves.com/choptalk.

OFFICE OF PUBLICATION

12829 Trinity Dr.
Stafford, TX 77477-4214
PHONE 1-877-655-CHOP (2467)
E-MAIL Letters@ChopTalkonline.com

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

It is the policy of this magazine and its publisher:

1. To contract with individuals on the basis of their qualifications and with assurance of equal opportunity and treatment, regardless of race, color, creed, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or handicap.
2. To not knowingly accept any advertisement which implies any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, creed, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or handicap.

ATLANTA BRAVES STAFF

PUBLIC RELATIONS

BRAD HAINJE - Director of Media Relations
BETH MARSHALL - Director of Public Relations
ANDY PRESSLEY - Publications Manager
Jim Misudek, Meagan Swingle,
Adrienne Midgley

GLAVINE'S COOL

AS MOST FANS KNOW, in the history of the World Series, dating to 1903, there has been only one no-hitter, a perfect game at that, pitched by the Yankees' Don Larsen in 1956.

As most fans do *not* know, there have been 614 other World Series games, producing a mere five 1-hitters. The last of those 1-hitters was the work of Tom Glavine (8 innings) and Mark Wohlers (1 inning) in decisive Game 6 of the 1995 World Series. That was the first and only 1-hitter in over four decades of Series history, dating to Boston's Jim Lonborg in 1967.

What is even more special about what Glavine did on the chilly evening of Oct. 28 at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium is that he pitched his masterpiece in the final game of the Series. Larsen's perfection was in Game 5 of a 7-game Series. None of the other four 1-hitters decided a Series either.

Of course, if Glavine hadn't been so special that night, there still would have been a seventh game for the Braves to fall back on. But the fact is that he was pitching for all the marbles. He knew it, and so did everyone else, including the heavy hitting Cleveland Indians, who had their backs to the wall - and couldn't do a thing about it.

Glavine had a sensational career, posting 305 victories (21st all-time and fourth among lefties), two Cy Young Awards, winning 20 or more games five times, and playing a leading role in the Braves winning the first 12 of their 14 straight division titles.

When all is said and done, however, Glavine's most-memorable feat will always be delivering that remarkable performance to put that '95 World Series Championship trophy in the Braves' possession. No one else has ever pitched better with everything on the line as Glavine did that night. It's as "clutch" a pitching performance as anyone has ever delivered in Braves history - and in baseball history.

During his career, it was often said that Glavine had ice water in his veins, a tribute to his coolness under pressure. Perhaps it came from all those hours he spent on the ice as a hockey player when growing up in New England. Whatever the reason, he was

unshakeable, a characteristic that will be put to the test Aug. 6 when the Braves retire his number (47) and induct him into the franchise Hall of Fame.

Even the cool Greg Maddux showed some emotion under the same circumstances a year ago. But then, Maddux only pitched a 2-hitter in the 1995 World Series!

Frank Wren did it again, making an excellent trade to try to position the Braves for a playoff run by sending Yunel Escobar and Jo-Jo Reyes to Toronto for Alex Gonzalez and two prospects July 14. Yes, Escobar has a lot of talent and he hit a grand slam in only his third game with the Blue Jays - but it was his first home run of the season and his first since last Sept. 2. The new scenery may snap him out of his funk, but he simply did not live up to expectations and committed so many unexplainable lapses that he wore out his welcome with the most patient of managers.

Gonzalez is a proven professional, and his presence and steadiness at such a critical position should serve the Braves well when the going gets tough. He's an excellent fielder and is in the midst of one of his best seasons at the plate. His acquisition strengthens the team on the field and in the clubhouse.

Readers with good memories might recall that in the April ChopTalk, I offered Brian McCann as a good MVP candidate if the Braves had a good season. What I really meant was All-Star Game MVP!

Thanks to everyone that participated in our Bobby Cox Poster promotion. Artist Steve Penley has completed the portrait, and you can look for the poster - and your name on it - in the September ChopTalk.

For those who missed the promotion, the poster is still available for sale, as you can see in the ad on page 5. It'll make a great collectible, as well as an excellent gift for Braves fans on your list.

This issue of ChopTalk was mailed July 23. The September issue will be mailed Aug. 20.

BEYOND BASEBALL

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN



THE CATCHERS



CONGRATULATIONS to two Braves catchers, one current and one former. **Brian McCann** (below) and his wife, **Ashley**, are expecting their first child, dubbed "Baby Mac," in early February. Former catcher **Javy Lopez** (L) and his wife, **Gina**, are waiting on the arrival of their first child together, a boy, due in October. Lopez has two sons, **Javy Jr.**, and **Kelvin**, from his previous marriage.



TOM GLAVINE and family took an unforgettable 10-day vacation to Italy, June 22 through July 2. Glavine, his wife, **Chris**, their children **Jonathan**, **Amber**, **Peyton**, **Mason**, **Kienan**, and Jonathan's friend, **Patrick Altmeyer**, started their journey in Venice, traveling from there to Florence and on to Rome. Along the way, the kids experienced hands-on demonstrations of making and decorating classic Venetian masks, Italian mosaics, and sculpting with marble. The visit to Rome was capped with a trip to the Vatican, including an up-close encounter with **Pope Benedict** greeting tourists in St. Peter's Square...

Ashley McCann, wife of All-Star catcher **Brian McCann**, didn't go to the All-Star Game this year, but Brian's parents, **Howie** and **Sherry McCann**, made the trip to Anaheim and were joined for the game by Howie's brother, **Ed McCann**, who lives in Las Vegas. The McCanns arrived in California on Saturday in order to sightsee. Visiting Catalina Island was high on their to-do list. **Kim Hudson** and son, **Kade** (6), went to California in support of their All-Star pitcher, **Tim Hudson**. Tim said he looked forward to having Kade, in full Braves uniform, with him on the field during the All-Star Home Run Derby. **Martin Prado** took his mother, **Irma**, with him to Anaheim, but long-time girlfriend **Valeria Alfano** was unable to

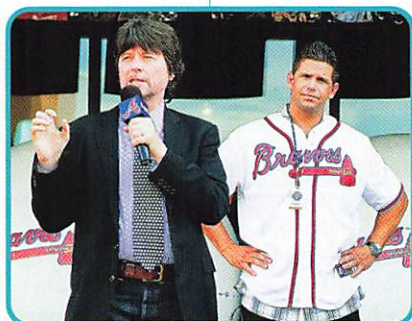
attend due to a work conflict. **Jason Heyward**'s parents, **Eugene** and **Laura**, and brother, **Jacob**, made their first visit to an All-Star Game, along with grandparents and aunts and uncles. Surprise All-Star **Omar Infante** was accompanied by his wife, **Yohanna**, son **Omar Jr.** (1), and both their mothers who visited from Venezuela...

Terry Pendleton had plenty of company on the Braves' July trip to Philadelphia and New York when his entire family - wife **Kathy**, son, **Terry Jr.**, and daughters **Stephanie** and **Trinity** - accompanied him on the charter. The family vacation included plenty of baseball in both cities, as well as taking the Statue of Liberty tour, shopping, and seeing a Broadway show on the off day in New York...

Ronnie Snitker, wife of third base coach **Brian Snitker**, flew to New York with the couple's daughter, **Erin**, to enjoy the July 8 off day visiting friends outside the city. They remained for the weekend. After the Sunday game, the

Snitkers flew to Norfolk, Va., to visit their son, **Troy**, and to watch him play baseball with his summer team, the Outer Banks (N.C.) Daredevils in the Coastal Plain League...

Sarah Wagner, wife of closer **Billy Wagner**, and two of the couple's four children, **Will** and **Jeremy**, were in the stands at Turner Field, June 25, when Wagner notched his



Filmmaker Ken Burns, who has produced a new baseball documentary, moderates a Q&A in Fan Plaza with Javy Lopez (R) and other players.

NOW BATTING...



KENSHIN KAWAKAMI and coaches **Chino Cadahia** and **Glenn Hubbard** gave Braves fan **Yasunori Kanda** (photo at right with Kawakami) an afternoon he'll never forget. **Kanda**, his wife, **Sayaka**, and sons (L) **Kohki** (2) and **Itsuki** (9 months), brother, **Yukinori**, and friend **Atsuo Nishikata**, enjoyed a private batting practice experience, with Cadahia and Hubbard serving as hitting instructor and batting practice pitchers. The player and coaches met Kanda, marketing manager at Bridgestone Golf Inc., in Covington, Ga., east of Atlanta, last year. They toured the facility in Covington and had their golf swings analyzed. They have also tried some of the company's new Precept golf balls. Kanda said Kawakami, a golf enthusiast, uses some Bridgestone equipment.



400th career save. The family traveled back to their home in Virginia on July 4 prior to learning that Wagner was on the "Final Man" All-Star ballot. When Wagner wasn't selected as the Final Man for the NL All-Star team, he and his family took their previously scheduled trip to the North Carolina shore for some family R&R...

Ken Burns, producer and director of the Emmy Award winning documentary "Baseball," has created an "extra inning" of the series which will air on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) this September. Entitled "Tenth Inning," the documentary picks up in 1994, where the last installment left off. Burns opens his film with footage familiar to Braves fans. "After the introduction, we open our film on the moment when Sid Bream slides home safe, in 1992, as a way to introduce Barry Bonds," said Burns. "But we set that moment firmly by focusing on Atlanta, Ted (Turner) and Jane (Fonda), Jimmy Carter, Francisco Cabrera getting the hit, Sid rounding the bases, and Jimmy Williams sending him... in the Braves going one way and the Pirates going the other." Burns paid plenty of attention to the Braves' vaunted pitching rotation - **Greg Maddux**, **Tom Glavine**, and **John Smoltz** - on Glavine's role as player representative during the contentious 1994 strike, and on the 1995 World Series between Atlanta and the Cleveland Indians...

And speaking of Emmy winning, **Brian McCann** will add an Emmy statuette to his trophy case. The catcher was listed as one of the nominees for the Fox SportsSouth special, "Spotlight: Brian McCann," which won a Southeast Emmy Award for outstanding achievement in Television News and Program Specialty Excellence: Sports-

One Time Special...

The **(Tim) Hudson** Family Foundation celebrated its first anniversary with a dinner party for supporters to look back over the accomplishments of the past year and to learn more about the Foundation's signature "Honky Tonk" event on Nov. 20. The dinner was held July 10 at the Loews

Atlanta Hotel in Midtown Atlanta...

Chris Glavine will host the 6th annual "A Tribute to Our Quiet Heroes" luncheon at the Grand Hyatt Atlanta on Saturday, Sept. 25. The event is an inspiring event paying tribute to the quiet courage of mothers of children with cancer. Information on tickets will be available in early August at curechildhoodcancer.org.



MaryNell Meadors, head coach/GM of the Atlanta Dream, welcomes John Smoltz to the team's practice.

FATHER JOHN

DURING HIS CAREER, **John Smoltz** often stated that he would love to coach girls' or women's basketball someday. He got a taste of what that might be like when he worked out with Atlanta's Women's NBA team, the Atlanta Dream, on June 25. Smoltz's participation promoted the team's

"Dream Dad" program to encourage fathers to remain involved with their kids. Other celebrity Dream Dads have included the owner of the NFL's Atlanta Falcons, **Arthur Blank**, head coach of the Falcons, **Mike Smith**, and former Braves outfielder, **Brian Jordan**.



VERY SPECIAL VISIT ✉

This past winter brought back memories of my first Braves Caravan visit. That was in 1970 at Woolco in Muscle Shoals, Ala. I left work early (my boss knew I was going nuts) to pick up my kids after school to see Mike Lum, Pat Jarvis and Dave Pursley. I was so thrilled I could hardly operate my new Polaroid camera. This February, I traveled to Hoover, Ala., to Academy Sports to see the Braves Caravan, and I was just as thrilled as I was 40 year ago. I met Craig Kimbrel for the first time after keeping up with him as a Mississippi Brave last year. He pitched at Lee High School in Huntsville, Ala., and at Wallace State Community College in Hanceville, Ala. I live right between those two schools. When I saw him again at the Braves 400 Fan Club banquet, it was wonderful to talk to Craig and meet his family. Since I claim to be the "biggest Braves fan in Alabama," I asked Craig to please drop by my office to see my "Braves museum." The day before he left for spring training, Craig and his girlfriend, Ashley, paid me a visit. I was more thrilled than I was in 1970!

ALTA BROWN
Decatur, Ala.

MOM'S BIG DAY ✉

My mom lives in Spartanburg, S.C., and she is the biggest Braves fan ever. Her name is Dot Jolly, and she turned 80 years old on May 16. There was no better place for all of us to spend her birthday with her than at a Braves game. Our entire family got together, and we attended the game vs. the Diamondbacks on May 15. She loves Glenn Hubbard, and was able to get her picture taken with him prior to the game.

She is an avid reader of ChopTalk. When she gets ChopTalk, everything else stops until she is finished reading it, from beginning to end. She has said she would love to be in ChopTalk, showing her support for the Braves. Here she is, wearing her red Braves jersey, with the entire family in the plaza just prior to the game. We would all love it if she could appear in ChopTalk as part of her 80th birthday celebration.

BEN JOLLY
Atlanta, Ga.



THE PENNSYLVANIANS

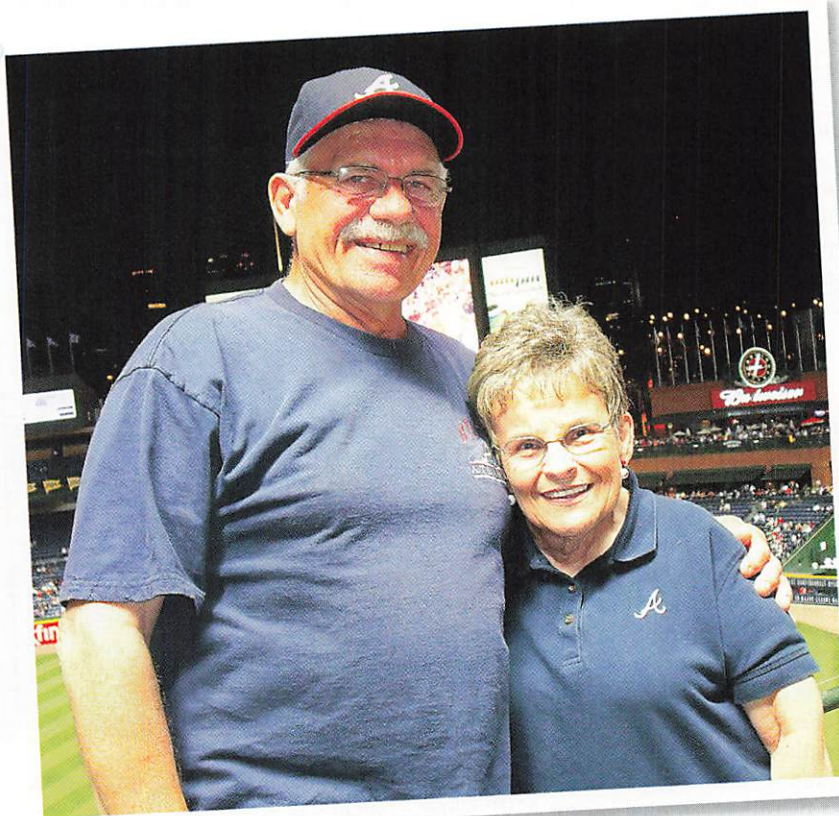
The Braves have two very serious fans in Erie, Pa. John and Darla Matson traveled to Atlanta in May for their 13th straight year to attend a 7-game home-stand! This year, their two daughters and one of their grandsons tagged along. We all had a wonderful time visiting Turner Field and watching the Braves knock 'em out of the park! On their way home, they also stopped in Pittsburgh to see the Braves play at PNC Park, and are looking forward to seeing them again when they come back there in September. They've been fans for over 25 years and plan to continue their yearly trip to Atlanta for many more years.

LORI MATSON
Pittsburgh, Pa.

MISSING A FAN

Our mom, Jeanette Bullis, of Rib Lake, Wisc., passed away at the age of 83. She was an ardent Braves fan all of her life. As a family, we would all go to many Braves games in Milwaukee back in those days. When the Braves moved to Atlanta, Mom continued her undying support of the team, watching every game and coming to Atlanta to visit - but really to see the Braves play. She kept up with all the players by being a ChopTalk subscriber. She cheered at home, wearing her "Chipper" shirt and waving her tomahawk. She loved the Braves, and everyone that knew her knew that. When we planned her visitation and service, we collected all of her Braves memorabilia and made sure everything was placed on a "Braves table" for all to see. That is how she would have wanted it.

JUDY MITCHELL & FAMILY
Atlanta, Ga.



SHARE YOUR BRAVES FEVER!

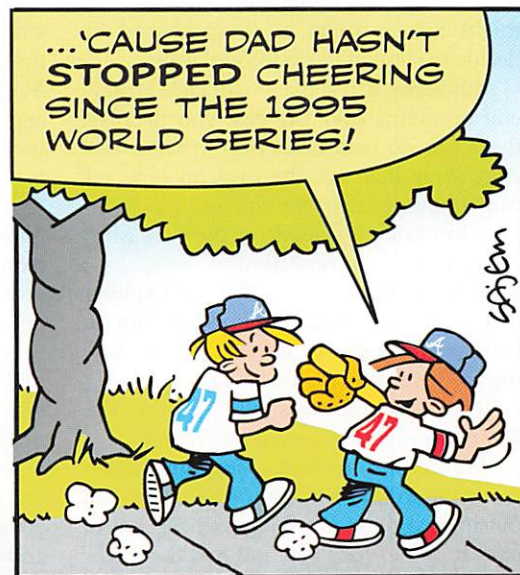
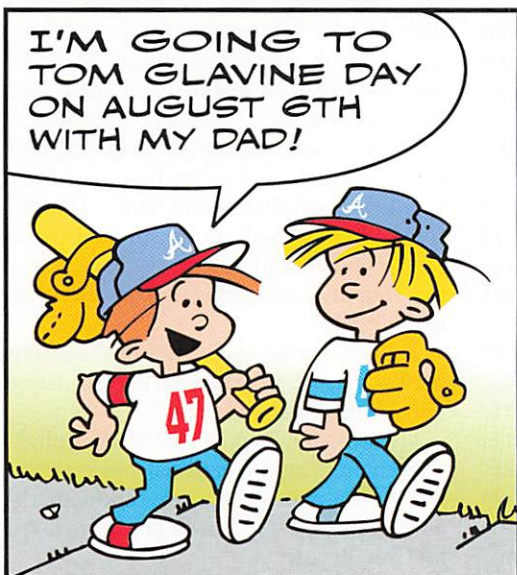
WRITE TO US

 Talkin' Chop c/o ChopTalk
P.O. Box 81247
Conyers, Ga. 30013-9247
 Letters@ChopTalkonline.com
Letters and photos chosen for publication are subject to editing, and photos cannot be returned. Computer printouts of photos cannot be published. High-resolution files preferred. ChopTalk reserves the right to use letters and photos for promotional and advertising purposes.

WRITE THE BRAVES

Atlanta Braves
P.O. Box 4064
Atlanta, Ga. 30302
For the Braves players, Bobby Cox, the coaches, broadcasters, or members of the front office.
If you request a response, be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Never send anything of value that you want returned. This is no guarantee of a reply.

SUMMER CELEBRATION



CHAUFFEUR FOR A LEGEND

Bill Ballew is a freelance reporter based in Asheville, N.C., and covers the Braves' farm system for *ChopTalk*. At the request of the Class-A Asheville Tourists, he recently had the rare assignment of picking up Dale Murphy at the airport prior to Murphy's appearance the next day at a luncheon and game.

BY BILL BALLEW

"Do you know what he looks like?"

I was more than a little disbelieving when Bryce, my 12-year-old son, asked that question while we awaited the arrival of Dale Murphy's flight into the Asheville (N.C.) Regional Airport. After all, I had followed his career from start to finish, living through every game-winning home run, game-saving catch, and, yes, game-ending strikeout on a breaking ball down and away.

The fact was, I knew Murf's face better than those of my relatives.

Even so, there was an aura about the former two-time National League MVP when he emerged through the arrival door of the airport terminal. He was carrying his leather bag over his right shoulder and yawning after flying from Salt Lake City through Atlanta to arrive in the mountains of western North Carolina for several appearances associated with the Asheville Tourists of the South Atlantic League.

At 6-foot-5 and only a few pounds heavier than his playing weight of 215, the 54-year-old Murphy still resembled the Braves rookie from 1977, with only the salt-and-pepper in his close-cropped hair and a few lines around his smiling eyes suggesting he might not be quite as sharp should he decide to step on the diamond again.

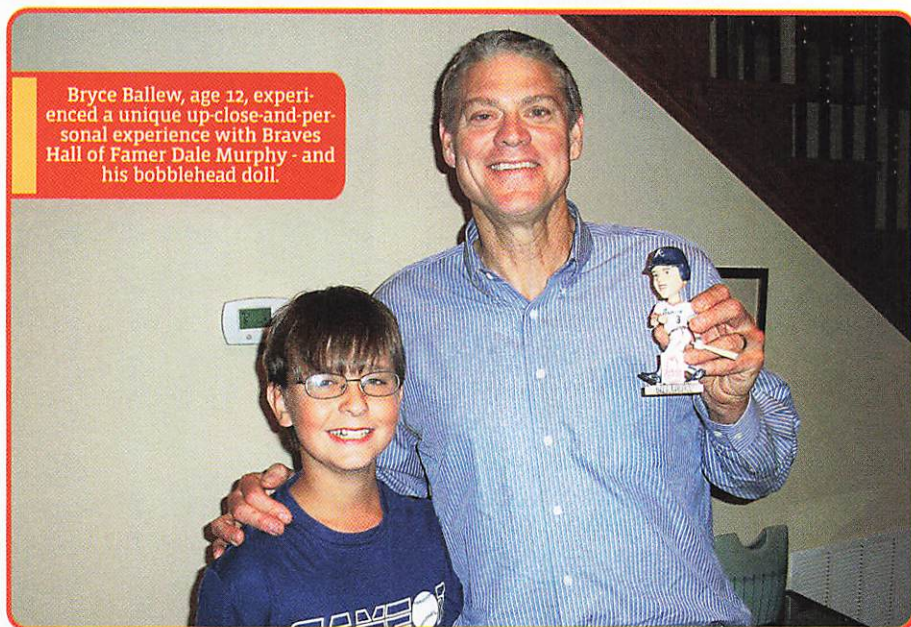
Although I had spoken with Dale on several occasions over the past two decades, there was no reason for him to know me. And while that was the case, an observer might have thought my son and I were his long-lost friends, based on the way Murf engaged us in conversation.

With the alternator in my Ford Explorer dying earlier that day, I informed him he had pulled the short straw, since I was driving my wife's much-smaller Kia Sportage.

"That's no problem at all," Murphy said. "By the way, how are we doing tonight?"

"We" meant the Braves, and somehow it made the world seem right when he pulled out his cell phone in the passenger seat of my car, hit a single key, and had the pitch-

Bryce Ballew, age 12, experienced a unique up-close-and-personal experience with Braves Hall of Famer Dale Murphy - and his bobblehead doll.



by-pitch update of Atlanta's game on the small screen.

For the next half-hour, Dale proceeded to tell us how he keeps up with every Braves game and speaks regularly with Bobby Cox and Glenn Hubbard.

"I get together with some of the guys at various events every year," Murphy said. "The Braves are now having an alumni gathering that includes a golf tournament. I love seeing Hubby and the other guys I played with, especially Phil Niekro. Knucksie is such a class act, and he was so good to me and everybody else when they came up."

I asked him if he had any insight into who might replace Cox as manager. Even though it was about a week before the Marlins fired Fredi Gonzalez as their manager, Murf believed somehow, some way, the former Braves third-base coach and the team would be reunited in 2011.

"Fredi's a great guy, and he reminds me a lot of Bobby with the way he manages and treats people," Dale said. "There are some other guys who deserve consideration, but I believe Fredi would be an ideal fit."

For the past few years, Murphy has been making appearances at minor league parks, most of them located in the Southeast. He nearly sold out the ballpark in Sevierville, Tenn., last July, with numerous fans wearing mid-1980s Braves paraphernalia while getting the chance to receive autographs and photos of Murphy. At all of the events,

he speaks about his Braves memories, as well as his recent initiative, the "I Won't Cheat" campaign for youth in sports.

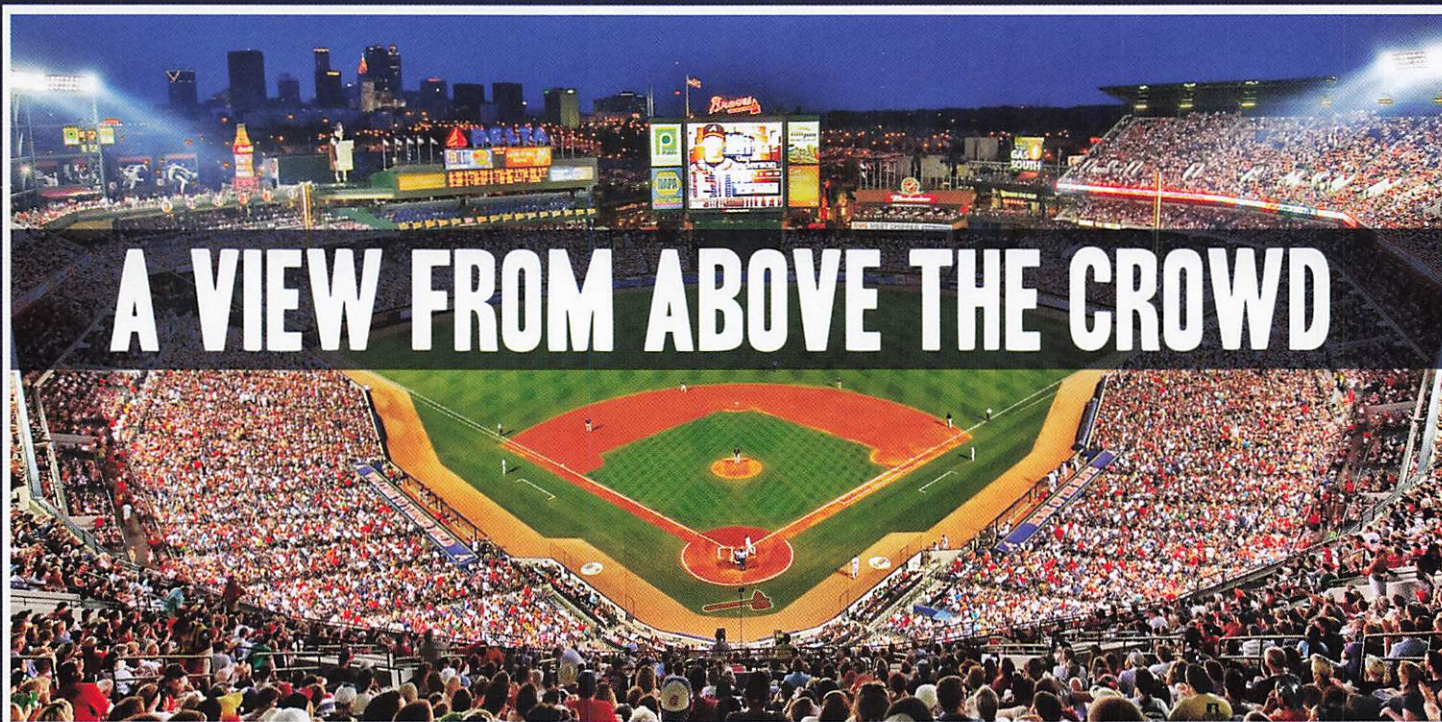
Murphy said that being in Asheville reminded him of his days in Greenwood, S.C., in 1975, when he was an all-star catcher in the 4-team Western Carolinas League that played an interlocking schedule with the four-club Carolina League. Former Atlanta bullpen coach Bobby Dewes was the manager of the Greenwood Braves, and the games were played in dimly lit, dilapidated facilities that had virtually no resemblance to today's modern ballparks.

"Dewsy really didn't have any help," Murf said. "He mainly just threw the bats and balls on the field and said, 'Go get 'em.' There wasn't nearly the amount of structure back then that you see in the minor leagues today."

By the time we arrived at his quarters for the weekend, Murphy already seemed like a well-loved member of the family. He personalized a baseball to my son and posed with a bobblehead doll of his likeness that the Tourists gave during a promotion two weeks earlier.

As Murf waved good-bye from the front door while we returned to the car, Bryce said, "Wow, what a nice guy!"

My response: "Yep, that's Dale Murphy." Even up close and personal, he's every bit the consummate gentleman - and remarkably "nice guy" - all Braves fans have loved for over 30 years.



THE CHAIRMAN'S SUITE

BIG NIGHT OUT

Big Night Out is one action packed night of incredible dining and Braves Baseball like you've never experienced.

YOUR BIG NIGHT OUT INCLUDES:

- 3-course dinner prepared by ARAMARK'S chef in the suite
- Cooking demonstration while you eat
- Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages (excludes liquor drinks)
- One Green Lot Parking Pass
- Suite Ticket for the game

PRICE

- \$125 per person

Contact Dennette Thornton at 404.614.1493 for dates and additional information.

SUITE FLEX PLANS

5 OR 10 GAMES

THE BENEFITS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

- Excellent for building relationships with your customers, clients or partners
- Valuable tool for entertaining sales prospects and closing crucial business deals
- Show appreciation to your employees by hosting them in an upscale environment

SUITE FLEX PACKAGES INCLUDE

- Your choice of games, subject to availability
- Company/Group recognition on the suite placard
- 16 tickets and 4 Parking Passes per game
- All-inclusive menu with ballpark favorites

PRICE

- 5 Game Flex for as little as \$2,800 per game
- 10 Game Flex for as little as \$2,500 per game

For more information regarding **Suite Flex Plans** call 404.577.9100, press option 4.

SINGLE GAME SUITE TICKETS

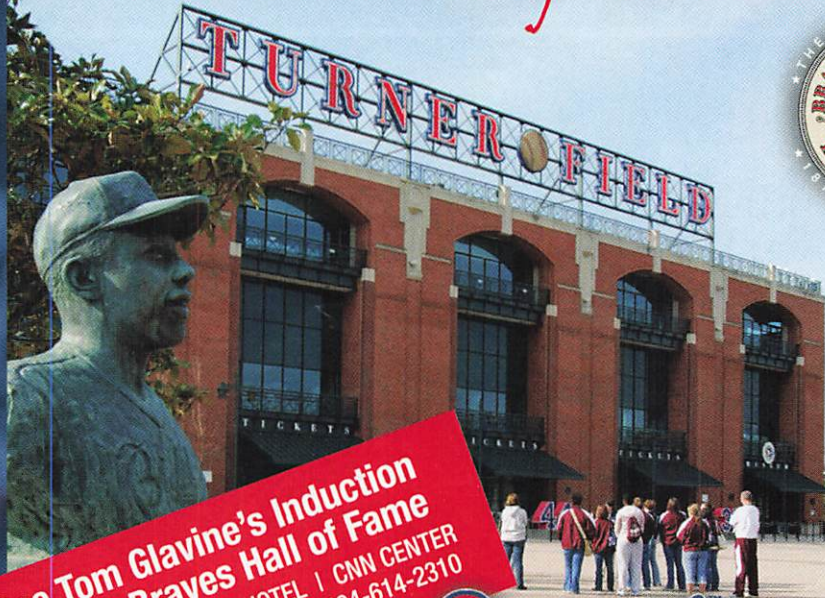
Enjoying Braves baseball in a private suite at Turner Field is an experience like no other in Atlanta sports. The Braves are offering \$100 suite tickets on weekend games throughout the 2010 season. The ticket includes a \$30 food and beverage credit and access to our newly renovated 755 Club – Delta SKY360° Lounge.

404.577.9100

braves.com/tickets



Tour the Home of the Braves



See Tom Glavine's Induction into the Braves Hall of Fame
 AUGUST 6, 2010 | OMNI HOTEL | CNN CENTER
 FOR TICKET INFORMATION CALL 404-614-2310



TAKE A ONE-HOUR GUIDED TOUR OF TURNER FIELD to many areas off limits during games, such as the press box, clubhouse, dugout and the SunTrust Club. Group and school tours are offered year-round, including specialized tours on the subjects of math and careers in sports. Call 404-614-2311.



VISIT THE BRAVES MUSEUM & HALL OF FAME AT TURNER FIELD and view more than 600 Braves artifacts and photographs on display. See items from the team's years in Boston (1871-1952), Milwaukee (1953-65), and Atlanta (1966-present), including Hank Aaron's 715th home run bat and ball, the 1995 World Series trophy and much more.

BOBBY COX \$6 DAYS

In honor of Bobby Cox's last season as Braves manager, tours of Turner Field will be \$6 on the following days in 2010.

2010	April 10	Bobby earned his first managerial win in 1978
	May 21	Bobby's birthday
	June 16	Bobby became the winningest manager in Braves history with 1,005 wins in 1998
	July 11	Bobby managed the 2000 All-Star Game at Turner Field
	August 28	Bobby earned his 1,500th career win in 1999
	September 29	Bobby earned his 2,000th career win in 2004

For tour or museum information call 404-614-2311 or order tickets at braves.com/tours

T-Shirts | Caps | Jerseys | Jackets | Ladies Apparel | Youth Apparel | Novelties | Collectibles | Game-Used Merchandise | 404-523-5854

MARKDOWN MONDAYS

Save 10% on your entire purchase at the Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center on any Monday from March 15, 2010 through October 25, 2010.

\$500 SHOPPING SPREE*

ONLY AT THE BRAVES CLUBHOUSE STORE/CNN CENTER

Starting in May 2010, visit the Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center and register for a chance to win a \$500 Shopping Spree of regularly-priced merchandise. One (1) winner will be selected each month during May, June, July, and August 2010.

* No purchase necessary. Open to legal U.S. residents 18 or older at the time of entry. Void where prohibited. Subject to official rules. Please visit the Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center for complete contest rules.



WE'VE OUTFITTED THE BRAVES.
 WE CAN DO THE SAME FOR YOU.

New! Braves Exclusive

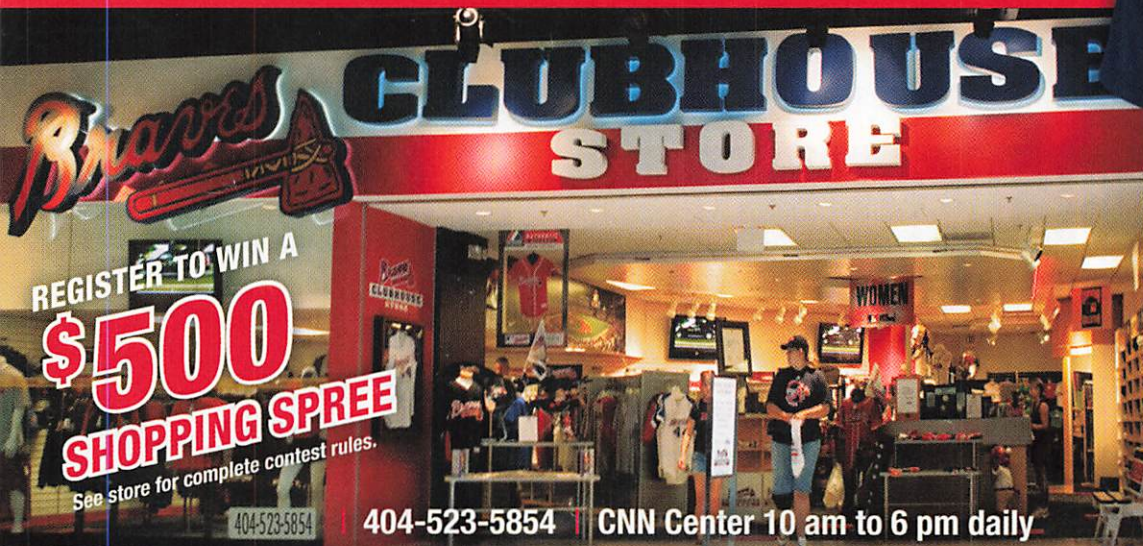
Replica Stitch Player Name/Number T-Shirts

100% cotton. Adult sizes: M, L, XL, XXL. #2237 \$25
 Youth Sizes: S, M, L, XL. #2222 \$20

#2237



HEYWARD
 22



REGISTER TO WIN A \$500 SHOPPING SPREE
 See store for complete contest rules.

404-523-5854

404-523-5854 | CNN Center 10 am to 6 pm daily